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Atlantic Insight is published 12 times a year by Insight Publishing Limited, 1668 Barrington St., Halifax, N.S. B3J 2A2. Second Class Mail Registration No. 4683, ISSN 0708-5400, Indexed in *Canadian Periodical Index*, SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: Canada, 1 year, $22. 2 years, $38; U.S.A., Territories and Possessions, 1 year, $35; Overseas, 1 year $45.

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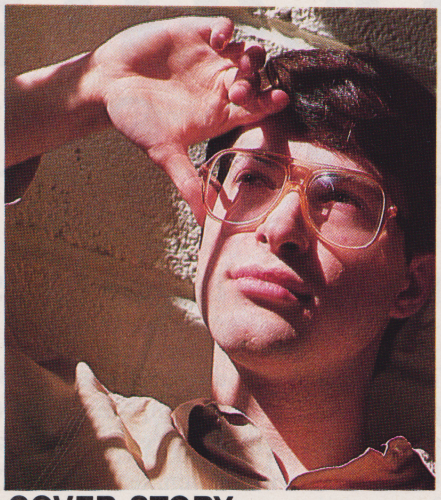

COVER STORY

Bruce Curtis, the man convicted of aggravated manslaughter in New Jersey five years ago, is trying to get back home. Despite legal and political obstacles Bruce's parents and friends are doing everything they can to see that the rest of his sentence is served in Canada.

Page 16

COVER PHOTO BY ALBERT LEE

FOLKLORE

Modern legends, widely believed fictitious stories, have been spread by various means and in different forms throughout history. In Atlantic Canada they are spread by word of mouth from generation to generation. **Page 11**

FOOD

Chanterelle — wild mushrooms that are an exciting flavor experience, can lend a new color and taste to ordinary mushroom recipes. They are prolific in the Atlantic provinces and the best part is you can pick them yourself ... if you know where to look. **Page 42**

FASHION

The Atlantic provinces offer a new line of original designs for the Atlantic Festival of Fall Fashion. An inside look at a few of these designers and their contributions to the industry, reveals talent in all aspects of the business. **Page 27**

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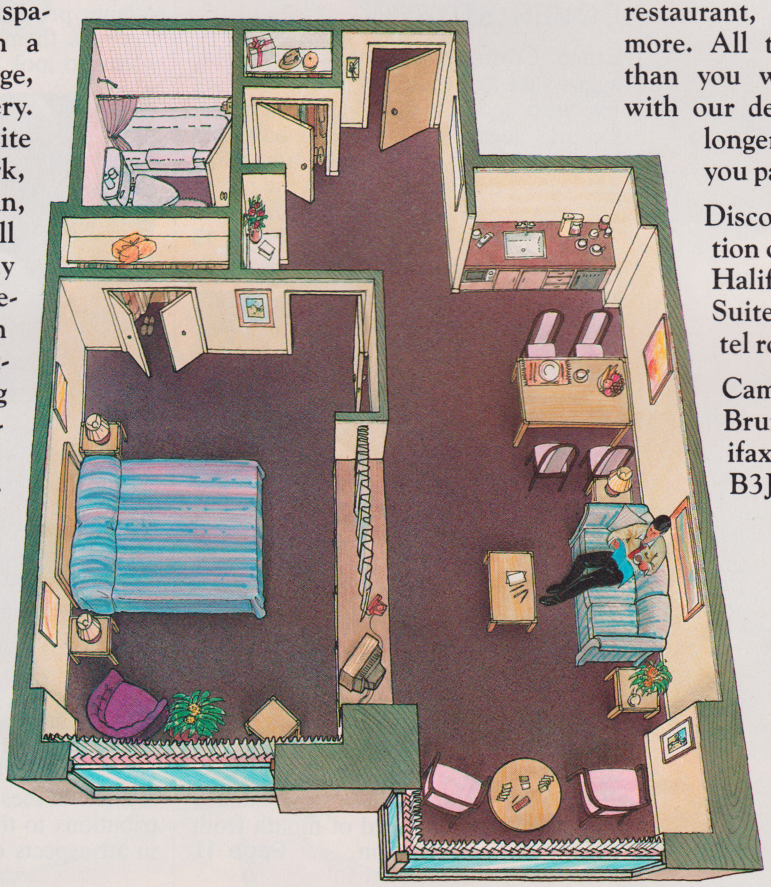

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Cultural industries loom large

Finding an old news photograph of Richard Hatfield with a Bricklin reminded me of the days when Atlantic Canada looked to central Canada, to the U.S., to Europe and to Asia for the investors and ideas that would generate development and new jobs.

The American promoter Malcolm Bricklin and his gull-wing door sports car was only one of the schemes which was supported by provincial governments in the '60s and '70s. Nova Scotia attracted the Clairtone factory from Ontario manufacturing stereos and color TVs. A U.S. promoter, Jerome Spivak, got us into the heavy water manufacturing business. The Island had a string of manufacturers of everything from skis to blue jeans in its government-financed industrial parks.

In that same period of time, there's been a dramatic expansion of a new kind of local industry right across Atlantic Canada. The industry in question doesn't have a proper name — it embraces crafts, museums, painters, art galleries, actors and theatres, writers, publishers and booksellers, musicians, all the people involved in making films ... What these activities have in common is that they are expressions of our culture. A shorthand term sometimes used to refer to this whole wide range of activities is "cultural industries."

Most industries are measured by their contribution to the economy — the number of jobs they account for and the impact of their spending on suppliers in their local areas. These indicators show that the cultural industries are making a major contribution to the economy of the region. Unlike the industries dominated by a handful of large companies, the cultural industries involve mainly small enterprises. There is no equivalent to the Irvings, the McCains or Michelin in the cultural field in Atlantic Canada.

Still, to measure the contribution to our lives of a singer-songwriter like Rita MacNeil by counting the jobs that her recording and performing generate is to miss the main point about the value of what she does. Our writers and their books, our artists and their works, our craftspeople and their crafts, our filmmakers and their films are important because of what they express and reflect about our unique heritage, way of life, and cultural identity.

In a way, the awareness many people have of the real value and importance of cultural activity in the region may explain why those responsible for our business and economic development pay so little attention to our cultural industries. By being regarded as too important to be reduced to just another industry generating jobs and wealth, Atlantic Canada has missed the fact that the cultural industries of this region do loom large — as just another industry. The products of our cultural industries are eagerly purchased both by people from the region and by visitors from outside the region and outside the country.

There is another key point to be made about the cultural industries. One of the most important preconditions of generating economic development is ensuring that a community has self-confidence in its ability to achieve success. Confidence is a rare and scarce commodity in Canada; we Canadians have never been all that certain that we are as good as people from the great imperial nations like Britain, France and the U.S. From the successes and achievements of our writers, our painters, and our musicians Atlantic Canadians learn that our experiences and our part of the world can stand beside the best of other regions and other countries.

Quebec is an important example of a society where cultural activities contributed to developing the confidence of the community in itself and its members. That confidence has now spilled over into Quebec's business world, and there is a tremendous flowering of entrepreneurial development in a wide range of fields generating new jobs and development.

Now that government is rethinking its whole approach to strengthening and developing the economic life of this region — galvanized by Ottawa's recent announcement of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency — it's time to look more closely at what's been happening under our noses in the cultural industries in the region. Thousands of people contribute to our cultural life and our economy by working in this field. Earnings in these industries are often not high — but the rate at which new employment is being created is rapid, and the industry's staying power is strong.

The media tell us that the great centres of activity in the arts and entertainment are in Toronto, New York and Hollywood. The fact we're missing is that we now have a great centre of activity right here in Atlantic Canada.

— James Lorimer

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FEEDBACK

A less-than-balanced account

I am writing in response to Ann Thurlow's *Standing up for artistic freedom*, (cover story June '87).

As a piece of biography about a person with an interesting background in the performing arts, the article is a fine one indeed. But in her eagerness to provide a backdrop against which to cast what she considered to be Mr. Learning's charming pugnacity, Ms. Thurlow offers a less than balanced account of what transpired in the controversy over *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*, particularly the aspect of Catherine Callbeck's resignation. That Ms. Thurlow is thoroughly impressed by Mr. Learning's cosmopolitanism is quite obvious. Surely, however, the controversy amounts to more than, as Ms. Thurlow quotes Mr. Learning, "a burp at the banquet of life."

Ms. Thurlow, taken as she is with Mr. Learning as a combatant for "artistic freedom"(as if today this somehow needs defending), seemingly concurs with his rather asinine write-off. As Ms. Thurlow so pointedly puts it, "Catherine Callbeck resigned." So much, apparently, for small-time moralists who do not yearn, as do the Learnings of the world, to "tell the world about ourselves — and ourselves about ourselves." It seems that Ms. Thurlow is less than taken with the Catherine Callbecks of the world who, as I see it, have a firm enough sense of who and what they are. These are the people who do not flaunt a sophisticated adversarialism as some sort of aesthetic virtue in order to appear more "interesting" than the next person.

In summation, what I find objectionable in Ms. Thurlow's piece is her decidedly protean rendition of a supposed countervailing current of thought against which Mr. Learning presumably defines his aesthetic autonomy. Traditional culture, whether on P.E.I. or anywhere else, is what it is and exists on its own account, its own terms, and is considerably more than an antagonistic function. Those who incessantly strive to present themselves as vanguard personalities are invariably against some perceived set of external constraints.

Ms. Thurlow displays a pronounced insensitivity toward the plight of a traditional culture in a contemporary world that, in part, has declared open season on all that is traditional.

W. Gordon Worth
Pownal, P.E.I.

God bless petitioners

Regarding *Standing up for artistic freedom*, (cover story June '87), I think Mr. Learning still has a lot of "learning" to do. I also think the CBC and its invasion of privacy with its piping of profanity into private homes shows little respect for Canadian taxpayers.

God bless Prince Edward Island's 1,200 courageous petitioners who are trying to prevent this same type of garbage from overwhelming them in their Family Theatre in Charlottetown.

Daniel R. MacKinnon
Victoria Co., Cape Breton

Laughing with Aristophanes

While I found your profile of Walter Learning *Standing up for artistic freedom*, (cover story June '87) most interesting, I was taken aback by the reference to Mr. Learning hearing a lecture at UNB on "Aristotle's comedies." Alas, the Greek philosopher Aristotle had no dramatic inclination, and certainly composed no comedies. Either Mr. Learning heard a lecture on "Aristophanes' comedies," or (given his interest in philosophy) on "Aristotle's Poetics," a treatise on drama.

Personally, I hope he heard a lecture on Aristophanes, since that illustrious Greek comic poet used language in his plays that would make *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* seem perfectly tame by comparison. Oh, to see *Lysistrata* on the stage of the Confederation Centre!

P.Y. Forsyth
Gladstone, P.E.I.

DeLancey's Brigade on display

I read with great interest Michael Prini's article *History lives* (June '87). I will look forward to visiting Saint John during Loyalist Days and seeing Peter Gillies and his soldiers on display.

My wife and I always look forward to receiving your excellent magazine, which we read from cover to cover.

V.W. DeLancey
Selkirk, Man.

International unions ignored

Your panegyric to Richard Cashin, *Waiting for the fish to come ashore* (cover story May '87) ignores the critical role of three international unions and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in the birth and growth of the fishermen's union in Atlantic Canada.

Cashin was not, as you write, "part of the organization from the beginning." It was the United Packinghouse Workers of America, (UPWA), a predecessor of the United Food and Commercial Workers, which sent money and staff to Newfoundland in the late 1960s to organize workers in the fishing industry. They were successful in Marystown, Trepassey, Catalina, Bonavista and other locations, while Cashin was still a Member of Parliament.

In 1968, the UPWA joined another international union, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, which encouraged a merger of its local unions in Newfoundland with the Northern Fishermen's Union, so that

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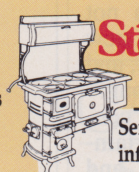

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these workers could speak with one voice through one organization. This earned it more than $300,000 in its first two years of life to assist the fishermen's union in organizing. Additional automatic subsidies and strike pay were generously given, even though the locals ran a continuous deficit.

Following the merger of the Amalgamated into the United Food and Commercial Workers in 1979, the subsidies not only continued, but were increased. In addition, the UFCW helped build Cashin's empire by encouraging the merger of several more UFCW local unions in the rest of Atlantic Canada into Local 1252. The UFCW has, since 1979, sent Local 1252 more than $5 million in subsidies and strike benefits, much more than it has received in dues from the Local. While no one will deny the essential role Cashin played in the growth of the fishermen's union, he did it with the unswerving and unselfish help from organizations he now unfairly vilifies.

Bill Reno
Rexdale, Ont.

One more heather habitat

Regarding your article *Highland heather*, Atlantic Homes (April '87), I would like to mention that my father, Arnold Trask of Digby, N.S., has been nursing two lovely patches of heather in his backyard for the past 10 years or so.

He found a small patch growing on a road bank along the shore in Digby County — probably planted by settlers who used to live in the area. He transplanted some to our backyard, and it has grown quite well, even surviving being moved again to a different part of the garden. Every year Dad gives everyone in the family a fresh, sweet smelling sprig of pink heather blooms to remind us of our Scottish heritage — and his green thumb.

Please add Digby, N.S., to your list of heather habitats.

Karen A. Cleveland
Digby, N.S.

Rumrunning made memories

As a subscriber to *Atlantic Insight*, I was particularly interested in your article, *Tales of rumrunning days* (June '87) by Belle Hatfield. As an ex-Nova Scotian, after graduating from Dalhousie University in the spring of 1930, I found jobs pretty scarce. In addition to my B.Sc. degree, I had gone to night school and had a radio operator's commercial licence.

Like the chap Ed Morrison from Yarmouth, I too was forced to take to the sea as a rumrunning radio operator and spent some four years in radio communications work both at sea in the little grey boats, and ashore on Long Island and New Jersey running the shore end of the communications business in liquor importation to the U.S.

Being 80 years old now, I was interested in the article. I did not know Ed Morrison, although we both must have been employed in similar fields at the same time. I sailed on boats outfitting in Meteghan and Halifax.

I enjoy *Atlantic Insight* very much and also enjoyed reading an article that brought back a little bit of my past. Thank you very much.

A.A. Cumming
Orangeville, Ont.

Doesn't go far enough

Ralph Surette's suggestion that denial of the German holocaust, *Denying the Holocaust: today's form of anti-Semitism* (April '87) be "recognized as an expression of hate," and dealt with by amending the Criminal Code is an excellent one, but does not go far enough. I suggest that any writing or statement made publicly that offends the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), or other Zionist groups, be deemed to be an offence under the Code. This would avoid the irksome necessity of a trial and would have the added benefit of removing the public platform of the Zundels, and their ilk, which has been the subject of complaint by Zionists since the Zundel trial.

Israel would become an incontestable paragon of virtue, Arabs would be referred to only as terrorists, all Germans would be war criminals, Palestinians would not exist, public challenge or even skepticism respecting Zionist assertions of "fact" would be suppressed by law (we are close to that point now courtesy of the "hate laws" — to say nothing of the inevitable Zionist invective directed at such heretics), and the CJC would legally be the exclusive purveyors of truth, rather than the self appointed sole source in the media, as at present.

The only question to be disposed of would be the sentence. A sliding scale would be put in the Code and, for example, to the extent that B'nai B'rith or the Jewish Defence League was offended, the CJC would be empowered to hand down an appropriate sentence — adhering to the scale, of course — thus freeing the courts of dealing with "the Ross/Keegstra/Zundel ilk." As Surette suggests it "would have implications for freedom of speech", but it would be a small price to pay as it might finally satisfy the Zionists — but I wouldn't bet on it!

It might, however, spare us, to some extent, the almost daily bleats in the media on the holocaust.

J.T. Murchison
Ottawa, Ont.

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Looking to be liberal Liberals

A caucus revolt brought about a leadership convention and now Newfoundland Liberals are trying to rebuild the party's fortunes

by Gerry Porter

The election of Clyde Wells to the leadership of the Liberal party has raised the curtain on a new act in the Newfoundland political theatre. A simmering undercurrent of discontent in the province with the Conservative government of Brian Peckford and the rising fortunes of the New Democratic Party, will assure a political season of high drama.

By all accounts, Wells' election in early June was a coronation. The 49-year-old lawyer gathered an overwhelming 87 per cent of the votes, defeating MHA Winston Baker and fringe candidate Edward Noseworthy. After more than 15 years out of politics, Wells returned to the fray to take over a divided and demoralized party, promising to lead it out of the wilderness where it has been wandering since the defeat of former premier Joey Smallwood in 1971.

Born in Buchan's Junction in central Newfoundland, Wells was appointed to Smallwood's cabinet at the age of 28, and was soon after elected to the House of Assembly. He broke with Smallwood in the dying years of Liberal party power but unlike a fellow dissenter, John Crosbie, he didn't bolt the party. He left politics in 1971, having since built up one of the most successful law practices in the province.

Wells' return was made possible by one of the nastiest episodes in the Liberal party's recent history. While former leader Leo Barry was in Boston at a trade show, his 14 member caucus plotted his ouster, going public on his return in a bitter war of words. Faced with a unanimous caucus revolt, Barry — a former Peckford cabinet minister who brought the Liberals from four to 15 seats in the 52 member House — resigned and called a leadership convention. Initially vowing to regain control of the party, Barry bowed out shortly after Wells entered the race, becoming the fifth deposed Liberal leader since the defeat of Smallwood.

The timing could not be better for Wells. Polls show the Liberals and Tories with roughly equal support outside St. John's, where the Liberals historically trail badly. With an official unemployment rate of 23.5 per cent, a poisonous labour relations climate after last year's public service strikes, and popular cynicism over Smallwood-like megaprojects such as the $18 million Sprung greenhouse, the Tories give the impression of having run out of steam.

"The PCs probably have worn out the welcome mat," says Memorial University political scientist Mark Graesser. "They've reached a point in the cycle of fortune where there's a distinct lack of enthusiasm. A lot of people who voted for the PCs think it's time for a change."

Wells will capitalize on Peckford's most recent budget, which maintained services while increasing the deficit in the hope that the federal government would eventually bail the province out.

"They said it's a desperate situation," Wells says. "They said we can't do anything about it and we're not going to do anything about it. We're just going to let it sit there until Canada gets a black eye. That approach just absolutely leaves me cold."

RAY FENNELLY

Wells: must demonstrate ability to govern

But out of power for nearly two decades and with an unruly image, the Liberals will have to demonstrate an ability to govern. To that extent, Wells and the other candidates at the convention reached back to the Liberal record, when unemployment averaged 2.3 per cent above the national average whereas now it exceeds it by 10 per cent.

"I see nothing wrong with hearkening back to the Smallwood times to look at the way in which the economy performed," says Wells. "There was economic performance; the province was making progress."

Winston Baker, the MHA who ran for the leadership as a left-of-centre candidate, agrees. "There were a lot of shortcuts taken (in the Smallwood era) but we had to get things done," he says. If anything, Baker galvanized the party's search for a left-of-centre policy footing feeling that, under Leo Barry, the Liberal party was perceived as being no different from the Conservative party.

"If the perception is that we are right-of-centre, there will be a policy vacuum — the NDP will pick that up," says Baker. "We have to be liberal Liberals."

The NDP have already attracted considerable anti-government support, particularly in urban areas where the Conservatives are traditionally strong. This dramatic shift was marked last December by the stunning victory of Gene Long in the Tory bastion of St. John's East, and impressive gains in the 1985 general election. Ironically, the NDP are likely to attract urban Tory votes and wouldn't split a left-liberal vote.

"The NDP, from the PC point of view, may be the spoilers," says Graesser. "That's the NDP role — to increase the possibility of a minority government, PC or Liberal."

But Peckford has proved to be a durable and wily politician, and Wells is still an unknown factor. "Wells is a bit like John Turner," Graesser says. "He's lived in a rarefied atmosphere for 15 years. To all intents and purposes he's been invisible; he was a name and gradually became a myth. I don't think his success will depend as much on content as on style."

One issue that has dogged Wells during the campaign and is likely to continue is the salary question. On entering the campaign, he was promised a salary compensation by unknown Liberal benefactors, saying the leadership would seriously reduce his income, rumoured to be more than $200,000 annually.

The salary for the leader of the Opposition is currently $57,000 and Wells says he needs about $100,000 to maintain his lifestyle.

But he bristles at suggestions that such a supplement will make him indebted to the party benefactors. Wells insists he does not know who they are and noted that Premier Peckford also receives a stipend from the Conservative Party.

However, says Graesser, "the main thing people know about Wells is he's got a rather acquisitive nature. That's the message people have received so far."

Wells will have his work cut out for him to recruit a credible slate of candidates and rebuild the party's fortunes. According to party president Norm Whalen, the party is $100,000 in debt and Peckford, a little more than two years into his mandate, started dropping hints of an election call only hours after Wells' victory.

"Nevertheless," says Winston Baker, "caucus is on a high."

Study reveals discrimination

Glaring differences between health services available in northern and southern New Brunswick have the government and the medical profession worried

by Sue Calhoun

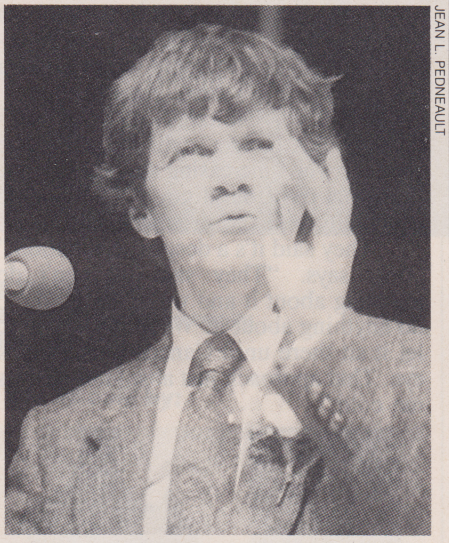
Marie is a 58-year-old unilingual francophone who lives in a small village in Restigouche County in northern New Brunswick. A few years ago, she developed a lump in her breast and, after a biopsy at a regional hospital in the north, was referred by a specialist for treatment at a hospital in Nova Scotia. She spent a month there in May 1985, accompanied by her sister-in-law and later by a niece, both of whom could speak English and translate for her.

In October 1983, Ginette, a nurse in northern New Brunswick, noticed a soreness in her throat. She consulted five doctors in Bathurst, Dalhousie and Moncton. None of the doctors took a blood test or a biopsy, and each diagnosed the problem as being minor. Later, she consulted another doctor who had just moved to her community and he referred her to a specialist in Montreal. She was diagnosed as having cancer of the thyroid gland in May 1984 — seven months after she first noticed the symptoms.

Baby M lived with her parents near Campbellton. An asthmatic, Baby M had an attack when she was 28 months old, and was rushed to the local hospital. She was treated with cortisone, but her condition remained the same. The decision was made to transfer her by ambulance to a more specialized hospital four hours away in southern New Brunswick — but the drive was too long. Baby M died five minutes before arriving.

These stories illustrate a phenomenon that francophones in northern New Brunswick have complained about for years: they face discrimination when it comes to health care. Now these complaints have been documented in a comprehensive study — from which these stories are drawn — recently released by the Society of New Brunswick Acadians (SANB) and directors of the province's 12 francophone hospitals.

The three-volume study by Dr. Jean-Bernard Robichaud, senior policy associate with the Canadian Council on Social Development in Montreal, is called *Objectif 2000: Vivre en santé en français au Nouveau Brunswick*. Funded mainly by the government of Quebec at a cost of $200,000, the study shows glaring differences between health services available in northern New Brunswick where Acadians are concentrated,



JEAN L. PEDNEAULT

Robichaud: study catalyst for improvement?

and those available in the south. In 1985, there was one doctor for every 754 people in the south, but one for every 1,094 in the north. The report says there are few specialized health services in the north, and many specialized services are not available anywhere in the province in French.

The report says that hospitalization rates are higher in the north. While an average of one in 6.6 people are hospitalized each year in the south, the rate in the north is one in five, and almost one in four in the Restigouche region. As well, the average hospital stay is longer for francophones; 28 per cent stay in hospital more than two weeks while only 8.5 per cent of anglophones do so.

Why northern residents are ill and hospitalized more often is not clear, though Robichaud suspects it has to do with the fact that a greater proportion of people living in the north are socio-economically disadvantaged. Volume I of the study points out that Acadians, who represent 33.6 per cent of the population in the province, had an unemployment rate of 17.8 per cent (StatsCan 1981) compared to a rate of 11 per cent for anglophones. People in the north are poorer than people in the south. They are also less educated — 25 per cent of the population in the south in 1981 had not finished grade nine, while the figure for the north was 35 per cent.

Robichaud believes these disadvantaged people, many of whom are unilingual francophones, are more susceptible to illnesses requiring hospitalization and are the ones who experience problems when receiving specialized services at anglophone hospitals in the south of the province. "It's not that they're in a hostile milieu, but rather a foreign one," says Robichaud. Forty-three per cent of unilingual francophones surveyed said they received specialized care from a doctor who couldn't speak their language. Even in their home communities, 14 per cent of French speaking francophones said they were served by an anglophone general practitioner. In contrast, 98 per cent of anglophones reported receiving care in their own language even in francophone regions and 100 per cent received specialized care in their own language.

Armed with Robichaud's statistics, the SANB and the directors of the francophone hospitals hired the Montreal consulting firm CGO (Conseil, Gestion et Organisation) to develop a five-year plan for the development of francophone health services. Released in early summer, its report said 160 francophone doctors were needed immediately to make francophone health care services adequate. The CGO report says institutions need to play a much more active role in courting prospective doctors.

That figure is a far cry from what the government seems willing to spend, however. Health and community services minister Nancy Clark Teed announced $1.3 million will be allocated this year to cover costs of support staff and supplies for francophone hospitals able to attract specialists, and another $375,000 will be set aside for settlement grants for specialists willing to move north.

At the same time, Clark Teed announced the creation of a cardiac unit for her home riding of Saint John which will serve 300 people per year. Clark Teed's decision was made against the recommendation of her own Tertiary Care Advisory Committee which said that backup services in the province are not adequate to support a heart surgery centre. It recommended that heart patients continue to be sent to hospitals in Nova Scotia and Quebec. Francophones have strongly opposed establishment of the unit. "There are just too many other services needed before the cardiac unit," says Liane Roy, executive director of the SANB. "Some areas in the north don't even have basic primary care. Lameque, for example, has one general practitioner when it should have six."

Still, Roy is optimistic that government will move to improve health care services for francophones. She maintains Robichaud's report has been the catalyst. "It's gone a long way towards sensitizing people about the whole problem," says Roy.

Debate over Cape Breton hardwood use heats up

The controversy about the best use of hardwood stands in the Cape Breton Highlands has independent woodlot owners and Nova Scotia Forest Industries on different sides of the fence

by Cristina Pekarik

Jim Mustard makes his own wine — maple wine, that is. He brews his own beer, using maple sugar for sweetening. Many of his meals are delicately flavored with maple sugar. Mustard and his partner Neal Livingstone, both private woodlot owners in Cape Breton, operate a small sugaring business in Inverness County.

The potential for what he sees as a growing and lucrative maple industry in Cape Breton is one reason that Mustard is against the cutting of hardwoods on Crown lands for pulp and paper. "It would make more sense economically, if we were using maple stands on the highland plateaus for sugaring instead of for pulp," says Mustard.

Mustard says some of the hardwood being used for pulp and paper may be adequate for more lucrative uses, including lumber, plywood and sugaring. "Used for pulp, a cord of wood is worth $270; for lumber, it is worth $900; and for maple syrup, it is worth even more," says Mustard.

OLIVER MAASS

Jim Mustard: standing up for hardwoods

Livingstone and Mustard contend that maple sugaring in Cape Breton could represent a billion dollar industry. "The maple industry in Ontario, Quebec, and New England is being severely damaged by acid rain,"says Livingstone. "In this part of the country we are not as badly affected by acid rain. If we conserve the maple trees, we can take up the slack in this lucrative industry."

Since 1984, Nova Scotia Forest Industries (NSFI) — a subsidiary of the Swedish-owned Stora — has been cutting an increasing amount of hardwood in mixed wood stands, to supply its needs in production of pulp and paper. According to NSFI officials and Ed MacAulay, provincial director of forest management for Crown lands, the company is encountering softwood shortages due to spruce budworm damage.

NSFI is now faced with the difficulty of high pitch content in the hardwood being cut, particularly yellow birch. Good quality paper is more difficult to produce as pitch content in wood increases, according to Russel Waycott, general manager of woodlands for NSFI. But the company's pulp mill at Port Hawkesbury is ill-equipped to process hardwood with high pitch content.

In 1985, the company applied for a licence from the province to export hardwood to Sweden. Since then NSFI has exported 50,000 cords of hardwood, and according to MacAulay, it is experimenting with new pulp processes on this wood. Waycott says that NSFI hopes to develop methods using more hardwood in pulp and paper production.

NSFI now holds leases to 90 per cent of Crown land on Cape Breton, a total of 40 per cent of forested land on the island. Although the department of lands and forests provides an inventory of wood on Crown lands, management plans are the responsibility of the company. "If they find a high quality sawlog volume, (trees cut into lumber) they report it to the province," says MacAulay. To date, MacAulay says the company has been using between five per cent and 10 per cent of the hardwood for sawlogs rather than pulp — well below the provincial inventory.

Waycott says that the hardwood forest on the plateau, the area in question, is low grade and does not make good lumber. "The trees have often been damaged by ice and snow," he says.

However, Mustard and Livingstone are concerned that the lack of a broader management plan is resulting in waste of the forest resource. They are calling for a moratorium on hardwood cutting on Crown lands, "Until," says Mustard, "comprehensive resource and environmental assessments, with input from public discussion, have taken place."

The woodlot owners argue that increased cutting of hardwood also creates environmental problems. The most pressing problem, says Charlie Restino, a land owner near Baddeck, is clearcutting (the practice of harvesting whole sections of the forest for maximum economic benefit.) At present, the province imposes no limits on the size of the clearcuts.

But conservationists have serious reservations about this method of regeneration. By clearing a tract of land of all growth they say it can take more than a hundred years for the stand of trees to grow. Clearcutting also leaves behind broken wood and other debris making areas unsightly.

"This (clearcutting) developed because of the spruce budworm problem," explains Restino, "when the company was trying to harvest faster than the budworms." The technique which was efficient and economical in the case of spruce trees, is now being applied to the hardwood. "In the highland plateau areas, where the growing conditions are severe, this is threatening the environment and wildlife," says Restino. MacAulay contends that the size of the clearcut is not important. "The size of the clearcut is not as important as the edge that is being created for wildlife," he says.

However, the woodlot owners are not satisfied with this explanation. Livingstone says, "It is possible to extract the resource while preserving the ecosystem; what we are experiencing now is an ecological loss of ancient hardwoods and the highland ecosystem."

The areas now being cleared are to be replanted with softwood. The province and company now share the cost for replanting on Crown lands leased to the company. The areas affected by spruce budworm, however, are the sole responsibility of the province.

The woodlot owners foresee problems with replanting in softwood. "The plateau areas will naturally reseed with hardwoods, since so much hardwood grows there now; this will require spraying to reduce hardwood growth," says Restino. "This will mean higher costs to both the province and the environment."

"If you add up the cost of replanting and then the high cost of spraying, it is going to be very expensive for the province," says Mustard. Given the present stumpage fees — the fee paid to the province by the company for the wood they cut — Mustard says the province will end up losing money.

State of schools sparks anger

Following a bitter and divisive controversy earlier this year, Unit Three school district had short-lived smooth sailing before another controversy flared — this time in Charlottetown

by John Gracey

Unit Three school district is embroiled in one more controversy. This time it's the parents and teachers up in arms over the condition of the schools in Charlottetown. This latest uproar follows right on the heels of the furor that erupted when Parnell Garland, Unit Three superintendent, resigned late in 1986.To this day no one, except perhaps a few board members and Garland himself, really knows the reason why. There was plenty of speculation: personality conflicts between Garland and some board members; certain things written into ,Garland's record that he took exception to; and Garland's methods which, some said, undermined the role of the board.

Barb McNutt, board chairperson, ruled the board with an iron hand. No one was to speak about the resignation and no information was released. The squabble continued until well into 1987. It finally came to a head with calls for a public inquiry into the unit's problems. To that end, Mr. Justice Kenneth MacDonald was appointed to make a preliminary investigation. When his report was completed, it was decided that a public inquiry wasn't necessary. Instead, his report would be the guideline for a working paper to deal with some of the contentious issues in the unit.

There remained a residue of bitterness and a feeling of uneasiness, but most seemed willing to let matters rest where they were. After all, they reasoned, school board elections were coming up in June and parents would get the chance to have their say.

Then along came Mary Mitchell and a group of angry parents. They're furious because they say, seven of the schools in Unit Three, all of them located in Charlottetown, are in "deplorable condition." Furthermore, they have the backing of seven home and school associations and many of the teachers in those schools.

In order to press their case, a special "technical committee" was formed consisting of parents in the district who have engineering or architectural backgrounds. Their report confirms what the teachers and parents have said. The schools are in bad shape. The report says electrical wiring in some schools is inadequate and dangerous, playgrounds are muddy fields, schoolground fixtures are unsafe and should be dismantled, removed and replaced.

The list went on. There are no lunchrooms in some schools and these schools have close to 60 per cent of their students bused in from outlying areas, unable to go home for lunch. Windows are so rotten, snow and rain leak in. In all the schools, space limitations cause students to be working in severely cramped quarters.

Led by Mitchell, the committee delivered the report along with a demand for changes to Premier Joe Ghiz and several cabinet ministers — including Betty Jean Brown, minister of education. They want a plan for immediate action on bringing the city schools up to modern standards. They want the schools at the top of the list for expansion and renovation and they want special funding to get it done. The committee also wants the government to provide funding for a comprehensive maintenance program.

Wiring is inadequate, playgrounds are muddy, fixtures are unsafe

Mitchell says Brown's response was not encouraging. She says the minister agrees the city schools do need attention, but there's no money and the department of education simply can't make a special allocation. She wants the committee to present its demands to the Unit Three school board and the school board to take the requests "through normal channels."

The parents aren't very happy with the minister's answer. They want another meeting with her to press their demands. In the meantime, they've taken the issue to Charlottetown city council. The mayor, Jack Ready, and several councillors went on a tour of the city schools. Council passed a resolution supporting the parents admitting the schools were in bad shape.

Island wide school board elections were held in mid-June and it was another disappointment for the committee. Turnout was dismally low, fewer than 20 per cent of eligible voters in some areas, including Unit Three. The committee had thought that the twin controversies over the superintendent's resignation and the report on the condition of the city schools would assure a good turnout.

The city parents also note the way rural schools have been built up and renovated over the past few years — at the expense, they claim, of the city schools. Mitchell says, "we've sat back for 15 to 20 years and had no major renovations or little repair and we feel it's time for us to get some improvements. All we want is what many of the other schools have."

In 1971, a new school act was passed and the Charlottetown school board was phased out in favour of a regional administrative unit. At the time, there were many people who said that it would mean the ruination of the city schools. Mitchell says that the schools have been neglected since the act was passed.

As an example of the advances rural schools have made, several of the teachers in Charlottetown mention — with more than a touch of envy — Morell Regional High School. It's about 30 miles northeast of Charlottetown and it's the latest to be renovated and expanded. It has large bright rooms, an industrial arts area that has the latest in equipment and ventilation systems, and 30 computers. It's one of the smaller schools with about 300 students. (By contrast, Queen Elizabeth High in Charlottetown, with about 900 students, has four computers.)

Meanwhile, Eric Ellsworth, administrator for Unit Three agrees the city schools may not be up to the standards of the newer schools but, he says, they're adequate. He says it's important not to forget the schools are getting older — some of them close to 30 years old. The older they get, he says, the more repairs they're going to need. He says that there are ongoing programs this summer to paint and do routine maintenance that will make the schools safe and clean for this fall's classes.

But Mary Mitchell says she and the other parents aren't going to give up. By early next month, the new trustees will have elected a new chairperson — Barb McNutt didn't run in the election — and Mitchell and the committee will continue to battle for funds to upgrade the city schools.

There's one question that no one seems able to answer. All schools across the Island have maintenance budgets. Why then have the city schools deteriorated to the point they have?

Legends have a familiar ring

Modern folklore addresses universal concerns with stories that are as old as the ages and are regularly brought up to date

by David Holt

Visiting Australia, a woman from Newfoundland befriended a stray dog which she slipped into her hotel room. Later, she smuggled the dog back home — where she already had a dog and a cat. One evening she returned home to find blood on the walls and both her original pets missing.

She rushed the new dog to the vet. "It's a good thing you fed this animal well," the vet told her. "It's a giant Australian rat and it could have eaten you too."

Philip Hiscock, a folklore archivist at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), heard this story in St. John's. "I was told it happened to the sister of a friend of the storyteller," he recalls. "But it sounds like a contemporary legend — a widely believed but fictitious story. "In another version, an American woman brings back a rat from Mexico, thinking it's a chihuahua."

Contemporary legends — also called modern, urban or migratory legends — can be hard to distinguish from true stories. Even experienced folklorists admit to being fooled sometimes. The stories always mention real names and places and are garnished with bits of local color that give them the ring of truth.

More important, perhaps, is that the legends address universal concerns. "The stories express the anxiety of modern living," says Peter Narvaez of the folklore department at MUN. Some modern anxieties, however, may be as old as human society, such as the fears of mental illness and irrational acts of violence.

"There was a story in St. John's about the Waterford Hospital, known locally as 'the mental'," recalls Narvaez. "A young couple goes parking in a woody area near Bowring Park. On the radio they hear that a psychotic killer has escaped from the hospital. The woman wants to leave but the car won't start. It's dark, rainy and windy. The fellow says he'll go for help and tells the woman to lock herself in. Soon the woman hears a thumping on the roof of the car but eventually she falls asleep.

"In the morning she's awakened by the police. 'Don't turn around,' they tell her

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREGORY HART

as they lead her from the car. Of course, she looks back — to see her boyfriend hanging by his neck from a tree, with his feet dragging on the roof of the car."

Folklorists study the legends to uncover deeply held beliefs and assumptions. Jan Harold Brunvand of the University of Utah says, "The important question to students of folk legends is not 'Are they true?' but 'Why are they told?'"

Modern legends may spread quickly across international boundaries, or they may spring up independently in response to common concerns. It's no surprise, for instance, that AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) legends are creeping into the modern repertoire. Here's a story circulating in the Halifax area:

One evening a man goes to a local bar, meets a woman and takes her to his room for the night. When he awakes in the morning, she is gone. On the bathroom mirror he finds a message written in red lipstick: "Welcome to the world of AIDS!" Sure enough, he goes to the doctor and learns that he has the fatal disease.

While this version is set firmly in Halifax, similar stories have sprung up elsewhere. An American television news report naively locates the tale in San Francisco. The scary story has spread so rapidly that folklorists have already given it a title, "AIDS Mary," in reference to Typhoid Mary who haunted an earlier epoch.

Often convincing at first, modern legends are introduced in a standard way that may alert the wary. Rarely does the narrator assert that the story happened to him or her. Rather, it is alleged to have happened to a "friend of a friend." In fact, folklorists have coined the term "foaf" to refer to this often quoted but dubious source.

More frequently, however, listeners must wait to hear several versions of the same story line before they question the truth of the tale.

CBC reporter Andy Patterson learned of another story that fits perfectly into the modern legend mold. A store owner in the Sydney area obtained a photocopy of a letter warning that "tattoo transfers" packaged with Blue Star chewing gum contained LSD. As Patterson reported on television, the local RCMP investigated the claim, "saying there was no cause for alarm, especially as this brand of gum is not available in Nova Scotia." This disclaimer by the police, however, did not prevent Vince MacLean, leader of Nova Scotia's Liberal party, from raising the issue in the provincial legislature and speeding the story on its way.

The fact that the letter was circulated as a photocopy is itself a clue to its folkloric origin. Indeed, "xerox-lore" is now the accepted term for a new quick and easy way of spreading misinformation.

There are many stories that deal with the safety of innocent children. "A year ago, I heard of an ominous black van driving around the Island," says John Cousins, an administrator at West Isle High School in P.E.I. "The driver of the van was said to be trying to entice children inside. One father supposedly chased the van and was able to get his children back. I heard the story from a reputable source and believed it. I even copied down the licence number of a black van with a horrid painting on its side of a monster devouring a human being. Later the RCMP said there was no truth to the story. Then I heard several different versions going around and realized it was a modern legend."

Cousins has studied traditional and modern folklore and realized that the

Legends encouraged by the Barrelman

Will radio and television destroy folklore in Newfoundland? Among French Newfoundlanders on the Port-au-Port peninsula, watching soap operas has replaced the tradition of public storytelling by the area's best raconteurs, according to MUN folklorist Gerald Thomas. "Today time is at a premium, he says. "How much more convenient to enjoy an addictive entertainment at the press of a button."

Yet the introduction of radio and TV also has a positive role to play: the formation of a new type of folklore called "media legends." Here's one example collected by Thomas' colleague, Peter Narvaez:

"When the TV was first brought out to the Cape Shore, there was a man watching one evening when a flock of ducks was shown on a wilderness program. Right away, the man grabbed his shotgun and blew up the TV trying to kill the ducks!"

Narvaez has collected many such stories about older people's early encounters with the new medium. "They're legends," he says, "because people believe they are true."

In Narvaez' view, these legends indicate a schism between older and younger generations. For centuries, communities in Newfoundland were isolated

and change was slow. Older people, the great storytellers among them, were respected for knowledge gained over a lifetime.

The introduction of radio and TV reversed this state of affairs. Communities were no longer isolated, and change came rapidly. Faced with the new technologies, older people — in the extensive folklore of "old foolishness" — were seen as incapable, disoriented, acting foolish and sometimes even as "mental."

This gulf between generations was bridged in unique fashion by *The Barrelman*, a radio program that aired from 1937 to 1943. The writer and performer of the popular broadcasts was one Joe Smallwood, who later admitted that the show launched his successful political career.

The Barrelman, according to Smallwood, was aimed at "fanning Newfoundland patriotism" by giving countless examples of Newfoundlanders displaying marvelous skill, ingenuity and genius and then great strength and speed.

Smallwood appealed to his listeners for stories which he repeated on the air: factual items mingled with jokes, tall tales and other types of folklore. He told of Bram Travers of Heart's Delight, "the strongest man in all the country, who struck a bull on the forehead once and knocked him flat on the ground." The man was also badly burned by fire, but "today his body doesn't carry even one mark."

"Beyond being a good teller of 'cuffers' (tall tales), the Barrelman represented stability and consistent benevolence," says Narvaez. "The Barrelman is perpetually informative, humorous and success-oriented. Moreover, in tradition-directed oral cultures, such as in Newfoundland at the time, individuals who exhibited great verbal ability often command high esteem." — *David Holt*

"black van" story may have antecedents going back a long way. "The legend of the Pied Piper addresses the same concern about child abduction," he says. "The piper is said to have lured children away from Germany to send them on a children's crusade to the Holy Land."

Terry Broadbent, an English teacher in Halifax County, has been soliciting local stories from his classes for years. He "publishes" the stories in small bound volumes. Some of the tales fall neatly into the modern legend category. His most recent collection comes from a class at Brookside Junior High in Terence Bay, N.S., and features several stories about the "bog lady."

In one version, on a foggy day a woman and her baby were crossing the highway over a local bog, when they were struck by a car and killed. "Now if you drive past the spot at midnight and it's foggy, you will likely see the baby in the back seat, with its mother sitting beside you," says Broadbent.

This legend parallels one of the classic stories of the 1960s — the vanishing hitchhiker. In this older legend, a driver picks up a hitchhiker only to have the passenger mysteriously vanish before the car gets to its destination. Then the driver learns that the hitchhiker is someone who was killed in a car accident on the same stretch of road.

Stories with a supernatural twist are common in Broadbent's book. One distinctive hair-raiser is told about a school on Maroon Hill in Sackville, N.S. (The Maroons were blacks from Jamaica brought to Halifax to work on the Citadel fortress. After the fort was built, they were freed and some settled on Maroon Hill.) According to one story, an old woman lived in a house on the hill. When she died, she left instructions in her will that a school for black children was to be built on her land. Later, white children began to go to the school, although the old woman had warned against their presence. A few weeks after the first white child attended the school, writing started to appear on all the walls. "Then one day," the story goes, "a little girl went to the washroom and saw a pair of black hands floating around in mid-air!" This legend no doubt reflects the racial tensions that have existed in Nova Scotia since the forced arrival of the Maroons in 1796.

The "recovery of item thought stolen" motif figures prominently in several earlier legends, according to Hiscock. In one story, a jogger in New York thinks a man has stolen his wallet. The jogger chases the man into the subway and manages to rip the man's jacket as he enters a car. Returning home, the jogger finds his wallet on the dresser.

Indeed, the most striking attribute of many of these legends is that they won't go away. Although sometimes they may lie dormant for awhile, they reappear later in another form. The process can go on for centuries, as Brunvand has shown in his book, *The Choking Doberman*. Brunvand traces the modern legend of a dog that chokes on the severed fingers of a burglar back to a tall tale published in French in 1579. Translated by Gerald Thomas of MUN, the tale tells of a rider who chops off the hand of an unsuccessful highway robber. Probing back still farther, Brunvand finds stories of witchcraft and "sympathetic magic." For instance, a witch in supernatural form breaks her hand trying to stop a cart. Returning to human form, her hand remains broken.

Brunvand also observes that our most innocent beliefs may have similar murky and unwholesome origins. Drinking water out of the opposite side of a glass, for example, is a holdover from the ancient superstition that saying or doing things backwards is a way of working magic. Listening to rock music backwards to hear Satanic messages is a related — if not so innocent — misconception.

The message seems to be that folklore is a powerful, and usually hidden, influence on human affairs. While it may be obvious that the folklore of past generations is less than literally true, folklore is probably as much a part of the modern scene as it ever was. "We might not know it," says Nova Scotia folklorist Clary Croft, "but we're all passing folklore today."

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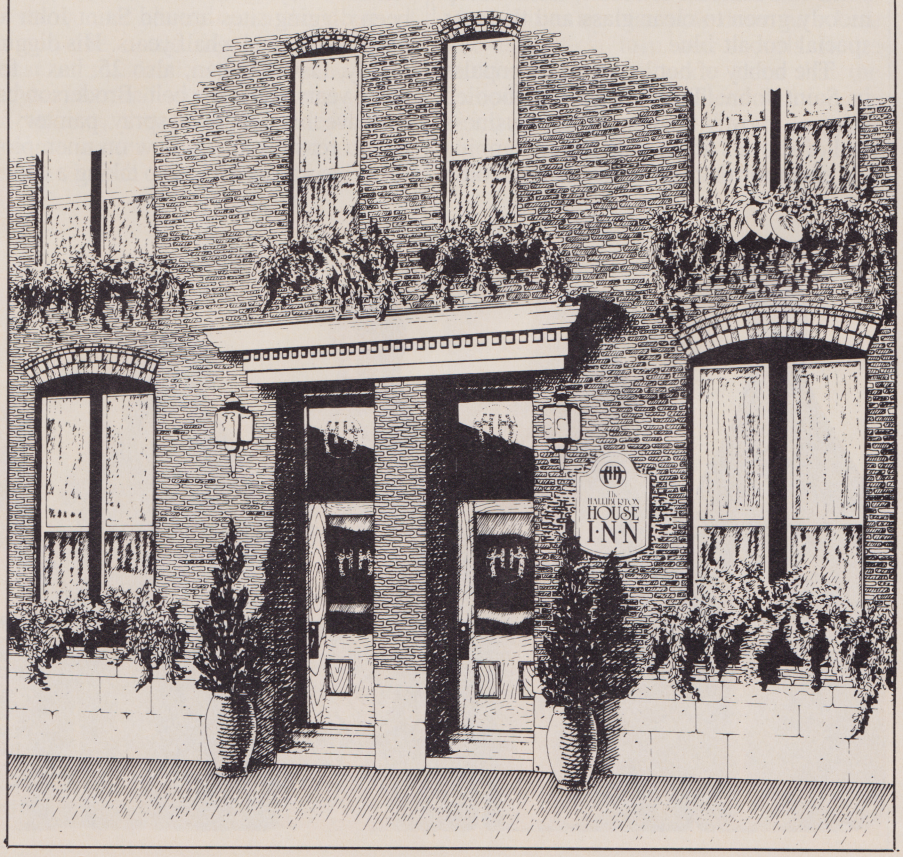


PHOTOS BY JAMES WILSON

Broderson (l), and Logan proudly display a collection of their underground treasures

Hobby for some, job for others

It's hard work and it's not always exciting but finding a rare old bottle made of stone can make it all worthwhile

by Michael Prini

Every Sunday in Saint John, N.B., there's a flea market where, in among the baked goods, jams, jellies and memorabilia a table can occasionally be found full of old bottles. They come in a rainbow of colors, from a deep moody green to clear glass and the ever special cobalt blue.

The hobby of bottle digging is popular in Saint John. There is an able-bodied army — mostly men — at the business end of shovels and potato hoes, combing the earth for that old James Ready bottle or a stone jug dating back into the 1600s. A hobby to some and a job for others, bottle digging can be an important source of income.

"Yeah, this place is treating us good. Last night we found two jugs and two 'stones'," says Leif Broderson, 25, who's been digging sites around Saint John for the past two and a half years. His digging buddy, David Logan, also 25, has a few more years under his belt. Broderson had to leave his job as a spray painter for health reasons and is now on unemployment insurance. He's also taking a course in glass blowing. Logan isn't so fortunate. The bulk of his income comes through social assistance. Many bottle diggers have the same financial worries, scurrying to dealers and other contacts they've made over the years to sell their wares.

Many of the grand old houses that once dotted the Saint John landscape have long since been torn down, their contents ploughed under a few inches or feet of topsoil and ash. After a few years in the business, the diggers learn to spot a potential dump while driving down the street. "When you look for a dump, you look for dark earth covered with grass," explains Broderson. Apple trees are also a clue that a vacant piece of land was, at one time, the site of a homestead. Most diggers are careful to ask property owners for their permission before they dig, with the understanding that the holes will be filled in again once they are finished.

It was Logan who discovered Lockhart's — named for its location behind a hardware and lumber dealer — a famous dump among Saint John diggers. As word spread that Lockhart's was a good place to find something valuable, more diggers were attracted to the site and the competition started to mount. Bigger holes had to be dug to get the valuable pieces. Says Logan, "Always remember when you're digging, the best bottles are at the bottom."

Digging can be a dirty and somewhat rough pastime. "You've got dirt trickling down your face, your heart's pounding, and you get white as a ghost," Logan says. He recalls the day a rock struck him on the head giving him a nasty cut. Broderson had to take him to the hospital, "but he was soon right back at it," Broderson says.

Diggers never know what may come up with a shovel full of earth. 'Stones' —

bottles made of clay — date back to the 1700s and are the prize of the trade. Simeon Jones, Dolan's, Nash and Roue are valuable to the diggers because they bring the highest price. Diggers also discover wire wheels, empty cans and other remnants of earlier days. Local favorites are James Ready bottles, back from when it was still an independent brewery in West Saint John. As they dig, Logan comes across a Sussex Beverage bottle, shaped in the form of a bowling pin. "It's some beautiful bottle. Look at that for a crest," he says. The bottle however, has a nick in the top, significantly bringing down its value. "I wish it would have been mint," laments Logan. "Damn, I wish it would've been mint."

At 35, David Rogers is one of the senior diggers in Saint John. He's turned the soil for precious finds for the past 20 years. Rogers echos the sentiments of collectors and dealers across North America — that bottles are a cheap way to make money over the long term. "Bottles always go up in price," he says. "In one way they're a hedge against inflation." Rogers himself is not a collector, but he professes to have dug up a lot of bottles that have added to the collections of other bottle diggers. A history buff, he once dug up what appeared to be a Celtic Cross. There was no one in Saint John who could tell him where it came from so he consulted with someone in Cork, Ireland. From that conversation, he discovered that the original owner of the ornately carved cross dated from the founding of one of Saint John's Catholic High Schools. His big dream is to go to Mexico or Central America and take part in an archaeological dig, but until then, he'd settle for a weekend away with six or eight fellow diggers somewhere in the Maritimes to try and dig for something different. "To me, that would be a vacation," he says.

David Rogers, a bottle digger for more than 20 years, on site at a dump with his latest find

Rogers also feels that working the earth is a good way to keep fit. "I like to exercise by moving my muscles and bones all the time I'm digging." Sweating in the sun or shivering in the depth of winter, the bottle diggers feel a great sense of satisfaction. They know what they're after and sooner or later, a scratch or two away, they know they'll reach their goal no matter how much mud and dirt they had to displace to get there.

Tension among the diggers is beginning to increase. Many diggers in Saint John think the valuable pieces will all have been excavated within a few years. Authorities are clamping down on where the diggers can turn their shovels. In the bottle trade you quickly learn that the people in the next hole can be your friends, but they are still your competition. "It's not like gold. You can't put a claim on it," says Logan.

Trying to come home

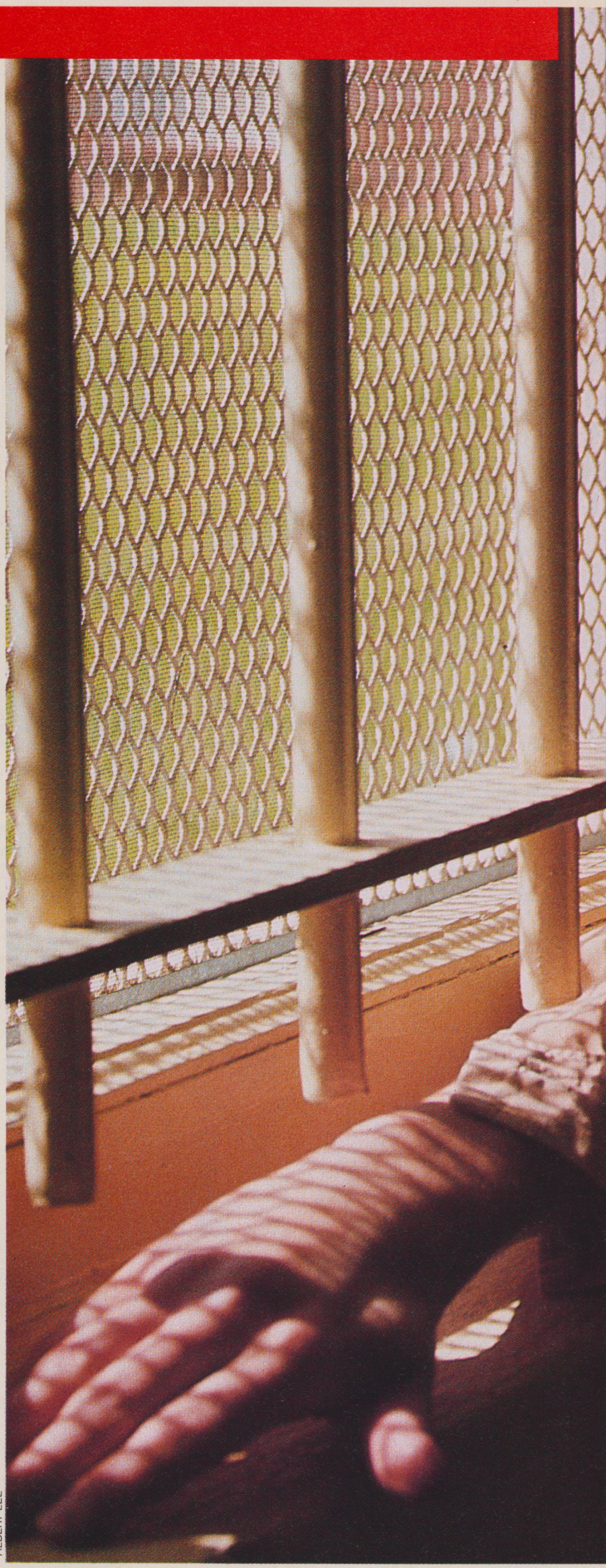
by Valerie Mansour

During lunch one sunny spring afternoon in Mount Hanley, N.S., Alice Curtis answers the weekly collect phone call from her son Bruce. They talk about food and books and whom he's heard from. Jim Curtis gets on the line and reports to his son on which flowers in their Annapolis Valley garden have bloomed, what kind of birds are around, who has a new baby and who has died in the community. "We keep him informed so he doesn't come back like Rip Van Winkle," Mrs. Curtis says.

Bruce Curtis is an unlikely resident of New Jersey's Bordentown Youth Correction Institution. The quiet, scholarly 23-year-old Nova Scotian mostly keeps to himself reading literature, listening to choral music and Gregorian Chants and writing poetry. He's been working on first-year sociology and psychology courses through a correspondence program from Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. He earns $1.50 a day teaching remedial English to prisoners and also helps them write letters and fill in forms. He avoids the cafeteria, not only because of his vegetarian diet but also to stay clear of prison violence.

"He looks at life day by day," says Alice Curtis. "He couldn't have survived five years and accomplished so much if he was foaming at the mouth. We're the ones foaming at the mouth." Alice and Jim Curtis and numerous Canadians from coast to coast have been working to free Bruce Curtis ever since he was sentenced to 20 years for aggravated manslaughter for the July 1982 death of Rosemary Podgis, a classmate's mother. Curtis' supporters believe the trial was unfair and the sentencing extreme for a young, first-time offender. But after three failed appeals, his lawyers and family are looking at their last resort — a transfer to a Canadian prison so Curtis can be close to family and friends.

"The transfer is the only thing that's left," says Alice Curtis. Adds Jim Curtis: "We can't see that New Jersey is gaining



ALBERT LEE

After five years in a New Jersey prison for a murder many believe was accidental, Bruce Curtis takes life "day by day." After three failed appeals his supporters still haven't given up and want him transferred to Canada

anything by keeping Bruce down there. All New Jersey is getting is a black eye."

If from the beginning I had tried to imagine doing five solid years of imprisonment my mind would have rebelled and said that such an existence is impossible. And so I have arrived at this moment in my life without ever acknowledging the vast span of time which stretches before me...

The story of the Curtis family's tragic connection to New Jersey is by now familiar. In June of '82, shortly after his graduation from King's-Edgehill, a private boarding school in Windsor, N.S., Bruce Curtis flew to New Jersey to visit with a classmate, Scott Franz. Franz had told friends elaborate lies about living in a fancy house by the sea with many servants and cars. Instead, what Curtis encountered was a violent and frightening household led by Franz' stepfather, Al Podgis.

Podgis, who owned 10 guns, was in a rage throughout Independence Day weekend and the two boys spent much of their time avoiding him by hanging out in fast-food joints and walking in the rain. Apparently because Podgis shot at Franz on the Sunday, the two boys slept on the downstairs couch that night with two guns between them. Early Monday morning Franz went upstairs to shower and during an exchange of gunfire, killed his stepfather. When Curtis, downstairs, heard the shots he grabbed a gun and headed out of the house. On the way he encountered Rosemary Podgis coming around the corner from the kitchen. The gun, according to Curtis, went off accidentally killing Mrs. Podgis.

The boys cleaned the house, put the bodies in the Podgis van and headed to Texas where they planned to seek help from Franz' sister. On the way they dumped the bodies in a ravine. Five days after the killings they were arrested in Texas and eight months later Curtis was tried for the murder of Mrs. Podgis.

Franz had agreed to plead guilty to the death of his stepfather in return for testifying against Curtis. His testimony was substantially different from his original statement, and included new points that proved to be damaging to Curtis' case. At the time of his mother's death, Franz had accepted Curtis' explanation of an accident, but he now brought that into doubt. Most of Curtis' trial focused on the gory details of what had happened upstairs, even though Curtis was not charged with that murder. As well, excerpts from Curtis' journal which made him appear irrational were splashed across the pages of local newspapers even though they were not admissible in court.

VALERIE MANSOUR

Fighting for Justice

Working towards the day their son comes back has been an obsession for Alice and Jim Curtis since Bruce was convicted in March 1983. Alice says she spends all her time on it. The dining room table of their modest farmhouse is cluttered with newspaper clippings, documents and letters. Bruce's bed is covered as well. Every few months Mrs. Curtis collates and mails out a newsletter to 500 people in the Atlantic Provinces. The material in it — copies of articles from the media, letters from Bruce and updates of the legal battles — is gathered and printed by Jim Curtis' sister, Lorraine Peever in Paris, Ont. The newsletter encourages supporters to write to politicians, hold public events and do what they can to support Bruce's early release.

This constant struggle has taken its toll on Jim and Alice Curtis. To visit their son in New Jersey, they travel two days there and two days back by car, a trip they've made 20 times. "It governs so many of your decisions. So many things depend on being able to be away," says Jim Curtis. "We take a lot of food," adds his wife. Both of them suffer serious health problems which make the tiring and expensive journey increasingly difficult.

The Curtises say they've spent over $150,000 on legal fees. They have been living on retirement money, saved from Jim Curtis' career as a captain in the armed forces, as well as what he now earns each week in Halifax, two hours away. Alice Curtis says the defence fund has helped and "one way or another we have managed."

But along the way the Curtises have become both bitter and cynical towards the justice and political systems. Says an angry Alice Curtis: "The legal system is a game. You think the court is out to protect you. But it's only out to convict you. And the political attitude is to pawn you off with some little phrase that will make you feel good." She says she's found you can't accept just one answer. She says you have to keep going back.

Dealing with these bureaucracies is in stark contrast to their previous quiet life in Mount Hanley. The Curtises, both from Ontario, bought their Annapolis Valley farmhouse in 1958. They lived there on and off during the next several years and then settled in permanently in 1976. For the most part, life with Bruce and his two older sisters, one now a doctor in Toronto, the other a secretary in Halifax, was quite ordinary.

But because of their conviction that their son's sentence was too harsh, the Curtises decided to take on the battle. What keeps them going? "When you're doing something, your mind isn't focused on defeat," explains Jim Curtis. "We've been able to survive because we're fighting."

They both say the support they receive from across the country helps as well. "It keeps your morale up when you're getting down," Jim says.

"The first people who were supportive were people with teenaged boys," says Alice. "Those are the people who can just see their boys acting the same stupid way, showing poor judgement and getting involved in something too deep."

The trial was later described by Curtis' lawyer as a "legal lynching." His client had no motive for killing Mrs. Podgis; he knew nothing of loading and firing a gun; the downward, severe angle of the shot substantiated the claim of an accidental shooting; and — what appeared at the time to be nothing short of a blessing for the defence — the gun Curtis used went off accidentally in the courtroom during his trial.

But Curtis was found guilty of aggravated manslaughter and was sentenced to 20 years, ten with no chance of parole, the maximum sentence possible. Franz, who was sentenced after he testified against Curtis, received the same sentence, the minimum for his crime of murder. At sentencing, Franz' lawyer said his client was "the less influential of the two, the less evil of the two, the one who came under the spell of Bruce Curtis." Curtis was sent to Bordentown and Franz to a more modern progressive facility. (Franz has since proved to be a troublesome inmate and has been moved twice.)

My present condition is punishment but not justice. The true spirit of justice will be served when under the constant prodding of knowing what I have done I attempt in many small ways to right the world's many problems. I have a highly developed sense of empathy with the underdog and should like to contribute to his advancement and fair treatment...

At the launching of a book on the Curtis story, prominent Canadian criminal lawyer Edward Greenspan said, "The procedure adopted in New Jersey whereby Franz pleaded, testified and then was rewarded by his sentence would never have happened here." Greenspan describes the case as the "over-sentencing of a panic stricken child" and says using the details of Mr. Podgis' murder meant guilt by association. "In my view this autopsy evidence was gravely prejudicial and irrelevant to the charges involving Bruce Curtis and it should never have been admitted." The failed appeals dealt with that point and also with the judge's failure to explain to the jury "accidental" killing. Aggravated manslaughter means recklessly causing a death through extreme indifference to human life.

"I honestly don't know why there wasn't a reversal," says Joanne Legano, Curtis' lawyer who works with the New York firm of Stillman, Friedman and Shaw. "Each time we were turned down it was shocking to us."

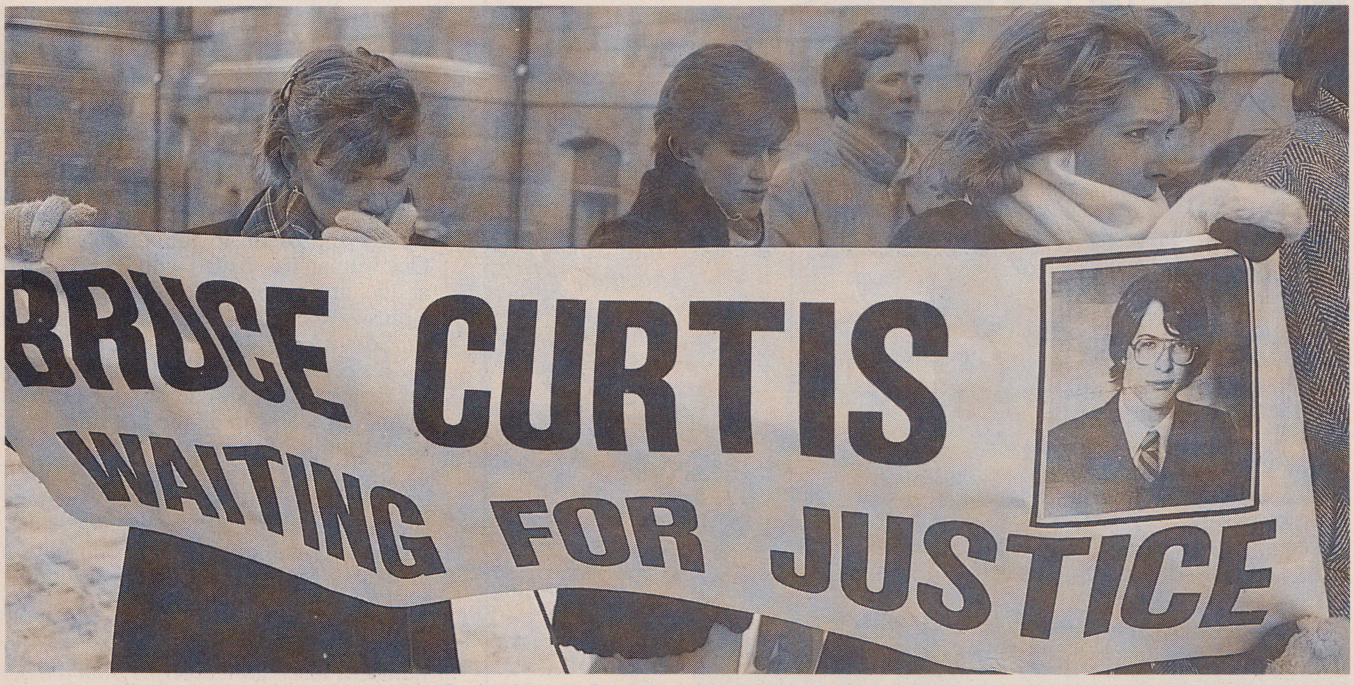
As well as the attempted appeals, a clemency plea was sent to New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean last July with a covering letter from External Affairs Minister Joe Clark. But according to Carl Golden, the Governor's press secretary, it is quite possible the plea will not be dealt with if Curtis wins a transfer. "If he is transferred, his attorneys will have accomplished what they set out to do. Presumably the case will be closed."

Legano says the clemency would still be appropriate under the Canada-U.S. Transfer of Offenders Treaty and should be considered. "I don't see how anyone could say we've accomplished what we set out to do. What we've set out to do is have him released at the earliest date possible."

The road to a transfer is a long one. The treaty, which is already in effect in several U.S. states, was signed into law in New Jersey last November. In June the one-page list of regulations for a transfer was issued, including the cut-off date of July 1 for public input. Following hearings, Curtis should receive an application form by September. With a three month turnaround first in the U.S. and then in Canada the earliest he could be transferred would be next February according to Daniel Hawe, director of intergovernment affairs for Canada's Correctional Services.

Charles Catrillo, the New Jersey assemblyman who sponsored the bill, says he has been trying to speed up the transfer process but has been told it is going at a normal pace. Catrillo, who decided to sponsor the bill once he read a New Jersey magazine article about Curtis, said he simply felt the young man had got a raw deal. "I feel the kid is getting the short end of the stick. I can't understand why they threw the book at him." Catrillo says he thinks the results would have been different in another county.

Whenever a major article appears in Canada I usually receive a wave of letters. The letters are all very kind, expressing sympathy and support. I find this outpouring very valuable for sustaining my spirit as it connects me with the real world and proves the inherent goodness of humanity which is a concept I need reaffirmed in a place like this. It is not as bad as it is made out to be at least not on physical level of constant fear and danger. That type of trouble comes to those who court it. More damaging, depressing and little thought of, is the mental anguish of confinement and treatment usually reserved for cows...



MICHAEL CREAGEN

Curtis' supporters continue to keep his case in the forefront as Bruce heads into the second half of a 10-year prison sentence in a New Jersey jail.

Gerald Morris, a retired University of Toronto law professor who has been one of the Curtis family's Canadian lawyers, is angry with the way the situation is being dealt with in New Jersey. "There were clear signs of vindictiveness on the part of the New Jersey officials," says Morris. "The appeal was not heard with the open-mindedness it should have received. I think it's an ugly situation frankly."

Morris isn't convinced a transfer will ever be accepted. He says it is well known that prosecutors in the U.S. have political ambitions. "They won't be shown up or be seen to lose control of it." Legano says the lawyers are relieved the county prosecutor does not have veto power over the transfer request.

Nervousness about the transfer, however, is understandable. According to the federal government's solicitor general's office, since 1978 when the treaty was approved, the U.S. has denied the transfer of 39 Canadians while Canada has never denied transfer of an American citizen from Canadian prisons.

Daniel Hawe says the only reason he can think of that New Jersey might deny transfer is because they feel it was a particularly horrendous crime. "Their problem is they feel he'd be given parole earlier in Canada. There is a general ill-based mythology in the U.S. that Canada's corrections are far too liberal."

If Curtis is transferred, Canadian parole rules would apply, meaning he must serve at least one third of his sentence or seven years, whichever is shorter, before parole is considered.

No matter how long the transfer process takes, Bruce Curtis' supporters across the country will continue their tireless efforts. Each January since his trial there have been vigils in various Canadian centres marking Curtis' birthday. This year people gathered in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. Curtis' parents work persistently on public relations and government lobbying as does his aunt in Paris, Ont. They keep journalists informed of what is happening, write to politicians, publish a newsletter and basically keep what they now refer to as "the court of last resort" — the public forum — open. His supporters have made "Help Bruce Curtis" bumper stickers and buttons as well as WANTED (at home in Canada) posters.

Curtis has been the subject of numerous media reports, there has been one book, as well as at least one play and talk of a movie. In Canada he has become a *cause célèbre* while in the U.S. he is virtually ignored, although CBS recently expressed interest in producing a documentary.

It is this sting of worthlessness which strikes deepest and causes the hours to be a source of never ending painful disillusionment.

One Dartmouth lawyer this year wrote to Nova Scotia newspapers urging people to boycott New Jersey because of Curtis' situation. "I suggest a campaign to encourage Canadians to boycott New Jersey for fear of falling victim to New Jersey justice," wrote John Filliter.

Some New Jersey residents also have been sympathetic to the Curtis' plight. One woman has visited with Bruce Curtis at the urging of her daughter in New Brunswick and the Curtis family has often stayed with her while visiting their son.

It's been a long and difficult five years for Bruce Curtis and his supporters. But giving up seems to be the last thing they would think of doing.

Says lawyer Gerald Morris: "Even if you feel he has to be convicted of something, it's a heartbreaker for someone who could make a real contribution to society. It's such a shame if they break him by keeping him there."

Italicized inserts are excerpts from a letter written by Bruce Curtis, June 1.

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A good business sense tempered with the human touch has made William and Catherine's 89-year-old family operation prosper

An Island tradition

Callbeck's is a household name on the Island and while the history remains valuable, the business also moves with the times

by Wendell MacIntyre

In the late 1800s, William Callbeck worked as a clerk in Colin Wright's store in Central Bedeque, P.E.I. The store was just across the road from the Callbeck's home.

On the day that William and his fiancée decided to get married he asked Wright for an increase in his $300 a year salary. Wright turned him down. Disappointed, yet undaunted, William started his own business across from Wright's store. Encouraged by his mother, he opened a tailor shop on his own premises in 1899, having learned the trade from "Tailor Ross" in Charlottetown. The new firm was simply called "William Callbeck".

William started by bringing in bolts and bolts of blue, black, grey, and brown serge, as well as a speckled brown serge for work pants. Assisted by Murdock Gillis and Albert Wright, William cut the cloth according to heavy paper patterns, and 15 seamstresses fashioned the various serges into three-piece suits, which sold for $15 each, with a tie or a pair of suspenders included as a bonus for the customer.

(The versatile Albert Wright was also an expert dry-cleaner, using his own mixture of water, castile soap, and ammonia to clean suits at a cost of $1.50 per job. It was Albert's task, as well, to make buttonholes for the suits and coats, and to do fine invisible mending.)

The Callbeck tailoring and ensemble quickly gained the respect and patronage of a growing clientele. Their suits and overcoats found buyers throughout P.E.I., Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and in Western Canada. John Stuart, from the management side of the business, travelled off the Island in quest of sales. Years later, in the 1970s, Frank Laird, a former mayor of Penticton, B.C. called on Callbeck's Limited in Central Bedeque while he was attending a conference in Charlottetown. He wanted to share memories of his father in B.C. getting suits from Callbeck's in the mail.

William Callbeck's zest for expansion prompted him first to take over a sawmill and a farm, both of which he managed along with his sartorial centre. Then, in a master stroke of irony, he bought the former Wright grocery store where he had once worked. He hired George Sutherland as manager, and George was later succeeded by John A. Stuart. The tailoring venture was retained, and it was later moved across the road and annexed to the grocery building. In 1935, the tailoring operations ceased, and the tailor shop

Callbeck's storefront has been a landmark in Bedeque for decades

GORD JOHNSTON

When his boss turned down his request for a raise it was the best thing that could have happened to the young William Callbeck and his bride

was converted into a dry goods department. So, what was once Wright's grocery store was to become the Callbeck's Limited of 1987.

Running a grocery store was a challenge in the early 1900s. In the case of Callbeck's, supplies were purchased in Summerside, and taken five miles by boat to Cole's Wharf about half a mile from Callbeck's store. Callbeck's served customers within a radius of ten miles.

By today's standards, groceries at Callbeck's sold at bargain prices. Some of these included: molasses, 45 cents a gallon; sugar, six cents a pound; butter, 25 cents a pound; cheese 16 cents a pound; and cotton, 10 cents a yard. Early country stores on the Island engaged in both buying and selling of household and farm goods. Callbeck's bought farmers' products, such as eggs, pork, grain, potatoes, poultry, wool, and dressed lumber. The farmers received credit-on-account for their goods, and were paid for them in the fall of each year, when Callbeck's had itemized their accounts.

William Callbeck served as postmaster in Central Bedeque, receiving and dispatching mail in one section of the grocery store. William's son, Ralph, and Ralph's son, William Jr., have maintained the postmaster's job in Central Bedeque up to the present.

As secretary for over forty years of the Dunk River Dairying Company in Central Bedeque, William Callbeck, Sr. took on added responsibilities. These included the keeping of patrons' records for cream shipped to the dairy, the making of payments to the shippers, and the preparing of annual statistics which were sent to the cream producers patronizing the dairy. William's daughters, Louise and Mildred, helped their father in his bookkeeping work and when butter made at the Dunk River Dairying Company consistently captured first prizes at the Charlottetown and Toronto exhibitions, the pride of accomplishment helped compensate for the rigors of the time-consuming office work.

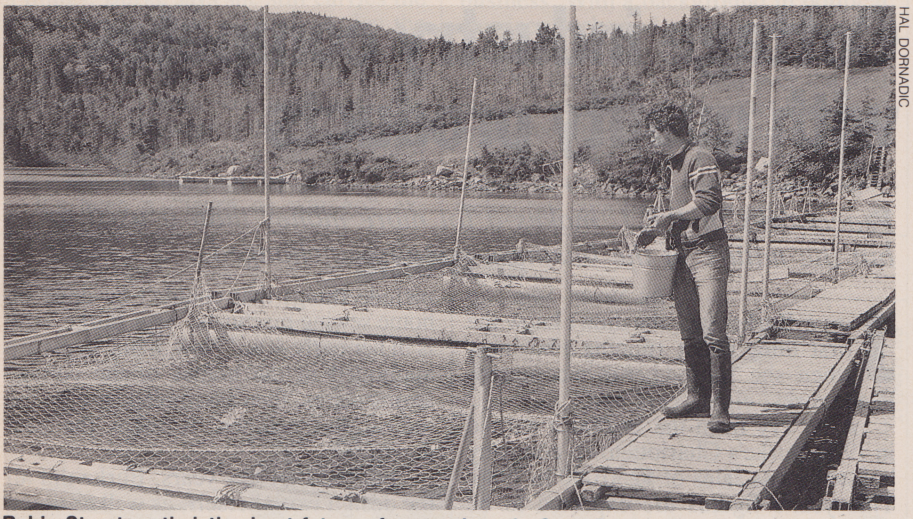
In 1950, William's son, Ralph, succeeded his father as secretary of the Dunk River Dairying Company. Then, in 1951, when his father died, Ralph assumed the management of the Callbeck business under the name Ralph Callbeck and Company. Ralph's brother, Henry, who returned to Central Bedeque from Charlottetown in 1949, became Ralph's bookkeeper, a position he maintained until his death in 1958. (The Dunk River Dairying Company became the nucleus of Amalgamated Dairies Limited — ADL — a business now flourishing in Summerside.)

When Ralph Callbeck died in 1967, his son and daughter, William Jr. and Catherine became co-owners of the company, now called Callbeck's Limited, the name by which the firm is widely known today.

William and Catherine enlarged the store in 1969 and again in 1974 providing additional space for hardware and furniture. Although the business remains a family operation — William's wife Helen is also involved on a day-to-day basis — the hardware section is now a Home Hardware outlet and the grocery is a Save-Easy store. Callbeck's employs 50 people, most of them residents of Central Bedeque and the adjoining areas and now has branches in Charlottetown selling furniture and in North Rustico selling groceries, hardware and dry goods.

Eighty-nine years is a long time to have been in business in any area and perhaps particularly in a fairly small rural area. Mildred Callbeck, an aunt of William Jr. and Catherine, while recalling with obvious joy her own role in the business, attributes the family's success to an attitude of respect and loyalty to both employees and customers. She says that the management of Callbeck's have always chosen to acknowledge the individual talents and personality of those who have worked for them over the years. Indeed, she refers with affection to former employees as being "like sisters and brothers to us children."

Many of their long-term customers agree that Callbeck's, as it moves toward its tenth decade, has succeeded in tempering business success with a human touch.


HAL DORNADIC

Robin Stuart: optimistic about future of aquaculture in Cape Breton despite a rocky start

Fish farming in Cape Breton lands investors' dollars

Money from Enterprise Cape Breton and a Norwegian company makes it possible for aquaculture experts to stay in business

by Hal Dornadic

If financial backing is an indicator, fish farming has come of age in Cape Breton. In May, the federal government announced that three separate but related aquaculture projects would receive $5 million. The money was awarded through the newly formed Enterprise Cape Breton (E.C.B). The funding represents a substantial investment, particularly when it's considered that the E.C.B. was created from the industrial division of the Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO). Only four years ago DEVCO abandoned its own aquaculture project because it said it wasn't viable.

Robin Stuart was employed at DEVCO's Cape Breton marine farm but was laid off when the project shut down. He decided he'd take what he'd learned about fish farming and start his own aquaculture business. Getting financing to start his farm proved to be a major obstacle. Stuart found that the closure of DEVCO's project was working against him. The banks said, "If DEVCO couldn't pull it off, how do you expect to?" So, he went the shareholder route, selling shares in his limited company. Through this method he raised $100,000 which his shareholders were able to have "matched" through the provincial government's Venture Corporation.

Loans from DEVCO and the fisheries loan board rounded out his financing and gave him some breathing space to operate. It's been a rough road in a business plagued with problems.

Cape Breton fish farms raise trout and salmon from the fingerling and smolt stages to adult size when they are sold to the public. The trout take 18 months to mature and the salmon twice as long. Robin Stuart hand feeds his stock. They're kept in wire mesh sea-cages in an almost totally enclosed pond in Englishtown, a small village on the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The 23-square foot cages are submerged so that the tops of the cages remain at the surface. They're supported by floating aluminum frames and anchored near the shore. One of the biggest problems with this type of operation is keeping the water temperature fairly constant, particularly during the winter.

In his first winter, Stuart lost much of his stock when the gateway to the narrow channel that leads from the pond out to the Bras d'Or Lakes, opened. "Once the relatively warm pond emptied out," says Stuart, "the cold water from outside came in and froze the fish." During the summer, when the Bras d'Or Lakes warm up a little, the cages are towed out through the channel to the summer location a few miles up the shore.

Another problem is disease. "Diseases can destroy a stock of fish," says Stuart. One bacterial infection is called vitriosis. "It's a bacteria that lives in the water in wild fish, but when you put hundreds or thousands of fish together in a cage, the stress factor aggravates the situation," says Stuart. Another problem is sea lice. "They'll bore right through the back of the fish's skull and suck the blood out," he says. "If they don't kill the fish outright, the holes they make leave the fish wide open to bacterial infections."

Ross Bennett is also a former employee of DEVCO's marine farm at Seal Island. He started his own farm, Seacoast Fishfarming Ltd., which he began on a small scale much the same way as Robin Stuart. But earlier this year Bennett joined his company with the Norwegian firm Norsk Aqua A/S. It's this joint venture that has received $5 million from Enterprise Cape Breton. They're also eligible for the Cape Breton Investment Tax Credit. The new operators will be much different from Stuart's salmon farm operation.

The joint venture will operate a fish hatchery under the name of Nova Aqua Smolt Ltd. Their product will be newly-hatched salmon and trout that will be sold both locally and in the United States to other aquaculture ventures. The company is located at the former site of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.'s heavy water plant in Glace Bay. A second sister company, Nova Aqua Salmon Ltd. will then raise the young fish to maturity near the Lingan power plant in New Waterford. They'll be sold on the U.S. market. A third company, Nova Aqua Sea Ltd. will operate a sea-based "seasonal" farm at the old DEVCO site at Seal Island.

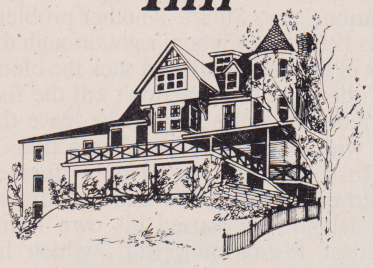
Bennett says there are several reasons the government has shown such an interest in his projects. First, the Norwegians are the most successful in the world in the aquaculture business. Also, their process will be highly automated. The fish will even be fed "by computer." Another basic difference is that the Norwegian-Cape Breton partnership will operate on land with the capability of heating the water if necessary, allowing for maximum growth and eliminating the possibility of freezing.

The tenacity of the self-financed, less sophisticated aquaculture projects like Robin Stuart's will be put to the test when this highly-automated, joint Norwegian-Cape Breton project is realized.

Robin Stuart remains optimistic despite the situation. He says the Norwegian involvement may finally lend some credibility to aquaculture programs in Cape Breton — backing up what he's been saying for years, even though he is against foreign involvement.

Ross Bennett, at the same time, is grateful for the overseas interest and government assistance. He says "if it wasn't for our involvement with the Norwegian firm, we'd probably be closed right now."

Boscawen Inn



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Cottage industry competes with quality products

Peaceworks in P.E.I. makes a lot more money than it used to but the nature of the business remains unchanged

by Susan Soucoup

Joyce Burke says she didn't know the first thing about running a business when she started her own company, Peaceworks, eight years ago.

A far cry from the $4,000 it earned in 1979, Burke's Charlottetown company boasted gross sales of $250,000 in 1986. This year's figures are expected to be significantly higher. Not bad for a little Island firm that relies strongly on cottage industry to produce appliquéd craft items.

Burke is the president of this company which manufactures many different lines of household accessories. The main line is their popular quilted calendar, depicting homey scenes like *Rolling Hills*, *Cottage*, *Lighthouse*, *Tall Ship* and *Fisherman*. The calendar designs are accessorized in many other kitchen items, such as tea cosies, place mats, chair pads and telephone book covers.

Then there are the traditional log cabin quilts. Burke's craftspeople adapt the design to a whole range of products, from place mats to queen size quilts.

Burke identified a market for appliquéd craft items, then sought out a few Island women to produce items for her in their homes. "I set out with the idea of selling these things at Christmas craft fairs, but after my first fair an agent approached me and asked to represent me."

In February 1980, she was in the Toronto Trade Show and began wholesaling the items — mostly the calendars at that point — to other craft shops. "Now we wholesale to about 150 craft shops right across the country. And we're about to enter the U.S. and Japanese markets."

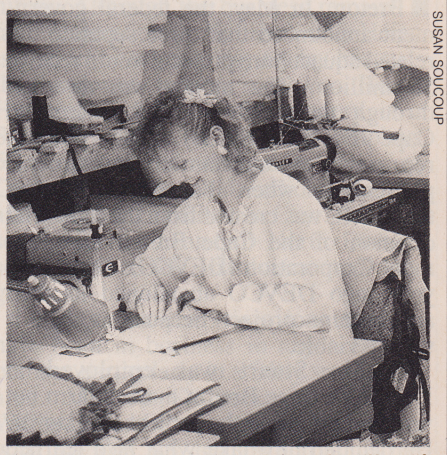
Peaceworks also sells its products through the Two Sisters craft shops in Charlottetown and Cavendish, in which Burke has a financial interest. At the moment, the "manufacturing centre" for Peaceworks is located at the rear of the Charlottetown shop, but that probably won't last long — Burke says the space is becoming too valuable as retail space.

Business increased significantly in 1986, when Burke acquired a contract to sew items for Bass River Chairs, a well-known firm with retail stores throughout the region. Peaceworks supplies fabric products for their franchises.

With the acquisition of industrial sewing machines last year, the scope of the operation widened considerably. "We were able to broaden the product line to include things that couldn't be done on home sewing machines," says Burke, who is in her early 40s. "Now, many items are appliquéd in the homes of the cottage seamstresses, then assembled here on the industrial machines. It keeps the cost down."

For the first few years, Burke did all the design work herself, as well as doing the marketing and production — everything but the actual sewing. "I didn't hire anybody to help me until the third year," she says, "when I hired a part time production manager. Now I have five full-time employees, four part-time and about 10 people who sew at home."

Burke attributes the immediate and ongoing success of Peaceworks to two factors. One is that the products are different. The other, she says, is quality. "Our appliqué products are unique. We have virtually no competition in the appliqué craft field in Canada. It's also extremely high quality. Small businesses can't compete on price, so we compete on quality."



SUSAN SOUCOUP

Kathie Stevenson sews up her "piece" work

Burke likes the idea of maintaining a relatively small manufacturing centre so she can continue to rely on cottage industry. "I've never liked the idea of a sweat shop," she says. "I thought it was a better arrangement to pay for it by the piece and let them do it at home."

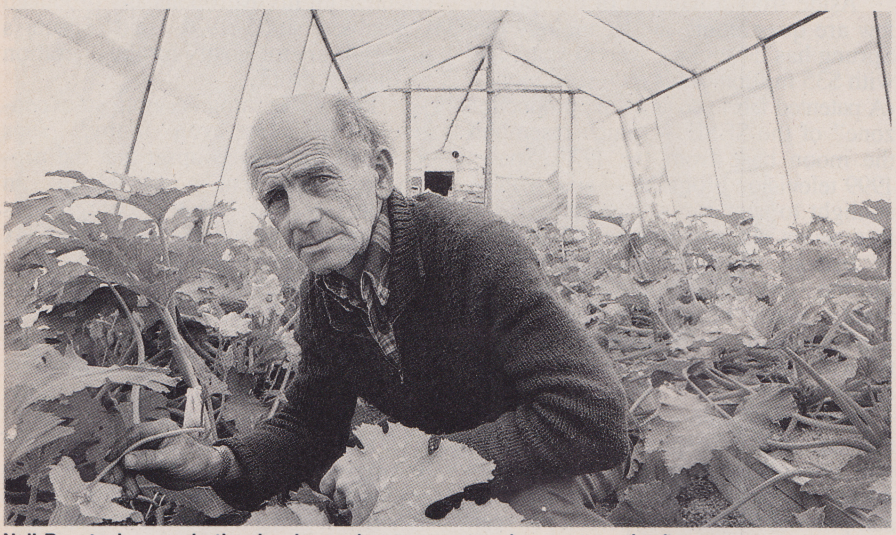
Preparing for the surge in the company's growth, she has hired a full-time production manager, and a designer, Carol MacDonald. Burke hopes to spend more time working on the marketing end of the business, though, she says the products practically sell themselves, so

marketing is fairly easy.

Nevertheless, even with the added staff on the management and design end of things, Burke says she still carries the biggest load herself. "I really enjoy the business, but from time to time I suffer from burnout. Sometimes I wish I were three people. I really feel, sometimes, like I'm General Manager of the Universe. I'm a single parent too, so sometimes I feel like a one-handed paperhanger."

It's been a "learn as you go" experience for this particular entrepreneur. When she started, it was with a rather vague vision of setting up her own business. With a background in political science, Burke had never been interested in business.

One thing she's learned over the past eight years is that she'd rather hire more employees than take on a partner. "I want to run my own show. I was never really happy in the jobs I had. I really enjoy being my own boss," she says.



RAY FENNELLY

Neil Roestenberg and other local greenhouse operators have not received any government money.

Hot house deal in hot water

Newfoundland doesn't consume many cucumbers, but it will soon be the cucumber capital of Canada. Local greenhouse growers say the government's deal with Philip Sprung is far from funny

by John Gushue

When entrepreneur Philip Sprung was forced to close his controversial hydroponic greenhouse in Calgary last March — allegedly because of gas leaks from a nearby closed refinery — the so-called leading light of the newest agricultural revolution wasn't worried about finding a new home.

In fact, Sprung told one reporter he was so sure of the success of his high-tech hothouse (actually known as a Sprung Environmental Space Enclosure, or SESE), he "could move it anywhere in the world."

As it turned out, Sprung decided to settle his prototype SESE (pronounced sessy) in the suburban town of Mount Pearl, on the western edge of St. John's, Nfld. While the move raised the eyebrows of the Canadian business community (which continues to view Sprung as something of an enigma) it has drawn a more pronounced response from many Newfoundlanders.

Much of the controversy stems from the province's partial financial backing of Sprung's operation. In return for bringing the facility to the province, Premier Brian Peckford's Progressive Conservative government granted Sprung $10.5 million in equity, services and guarantees. The government expects about 150 permanent jobs to be created through the facility.

As well, Newfoundland's support for Sprung, a multi-millionaire whose century-old family business is largely based around camping equipment and outdoor wear, is contrary to the judgement of other governments. Federal researchers, for example, found Sprung's system too risky to support, and Prince Edward Island cast a similar vote of non-confidence. (Other provinces apparently lost interest in Sprung's top-secret system after the Calgary unit closed.)

Nonetheless, Newfoundland agriculture minister Bob Alyward is confident his government has made a sound decision. Even though provincial officials have not released information concerning

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their evaluation of Sprung's proposal, Alyward says "the economics still work out. We think this will succeed."

However, opposition politicians, many greenhouse growers, and growing numbers of observers are far from convinced. Indeed, Liberal agriculture critic Beaton Tulk feels that so much skepticism is brewing about the facility, "it looks like we've got another rubber boot factory on our hands", he says, referring to one of former premier Joey Smallwood's disastrous industrial ventures.

Aside from a handful of exceptions, few are questioning the technology that Sprung has developed over 10 years and with $35 million of his own seed money. (A patented fabric coats each "production zone" of the SESE — which resembles the moon base from the 1970s Space: 1999 television program — and diffuses sunlight to spur rapid vegetable growth in a secret nutrient-feeding system.)

Instead, most critics charge that the Sprung project is not economically viable, partly because of unsure local markets for the two vegetables the facility will first produce — tomatoes and cucumbers.

Newfoundlanders eat only a tenth of the national per capita consumption of five cucumbers a year, and less than 40 per cent of the national tomato consumption of 5.5 kilos per person per year. With the Sprung facility in Calgary producing about 28,000 tomatoes and 22,000 cucumbers a day, skeptics are wondering where all those vegetables will go.

Alyward admits there will be a large surplus of vegetables from the SESE, but says markets west of Quebec could be tapped. "New Brunswick alone could take it all," Mr. Alyward says. "If we could get part of that market, part of Quebec, part of other markets, then we'll have quite a market."

However, Tulk says the government should confirm markets before production begins. "Do we have any guarantees that New Brunswick will buy from us?" he asks. "They should very clearly explain this...I don't think they have an answer."

Meanwhile, the Greenhouse Growers Association of Nova Scotia and other operators claim Sprung, who intends to build other facilities in Newfoundland, may drive growers in the region out of business. As well, association president James Keizer wrote a letter to Peckford in May charging that Sprung "cannot deliver what he promises on this greenhouse project."

Provincial NDP leader Peter Fenwick, who has made a living growing plants in greenhouses, says the Sprung project in Newfoundland is doomed. "It will have no impact on the province," Fenwick predicts. "It'll open, run for a little while, and then collapse."

According to Fenwick, basic operating costs such as depreciation, energy and overhead will drive Sprung under. "Eventually, the bottom line will sink it, and if the bottom line doesn't sink it, all sorts of other economic factors will," says Fenwick, adding that the project is "so stupid, it's beyond you that intelligent beings agreed to it."

Despite the threat of jobs being lost in smaller greenhouses in the region, one Newfoundland operator is as sure his business will prosper as he is sure Sprung's will fail. Neil Roestenberg of Bauline, who has built up a steady clientele for his hydroponically produced vegetables since 1976, said Sprung's materials are too costly for the operation to show a profit.

"The whole thing is set up so expensively, it's not even funny," says Roestenberg, who is upset that the provincial government is subsidizing an outside operation while local growers have never received aid other than tax relief provided to farmers.

"That money would have been better spent on us," Roestenberg says of Newfoundland's growing hydroponics industry. "Instead, they're throwing away a whole big pile of money on Sprung. From what I know, it's not going to work.

"The premier says we're afraid of Sprung. I'm not worried. I've got my own connections," Roestenberg says. "And they're not going to be here long anyway. But that's not the point."

Further concerns have added to doubts about the Sprung facility. For one, it has never been confirmed whether a gas leak closed the Calgary complex; Canadian Western Natural Gas technicians could not find evidence of a leak. As well, the City of Calgary seized Sprung's assets May 28 because of unpaid taxes, although officials say that matter will only cause minor delays in the move to Newfoundland this fall.

Also, Sprung himself told reporters before the announcement of his deal with Newfoundland that his enterprise was in jeopardy. Sprung hopes to make another fortune selling rights to the SESE to other firms, although interest in his technology almost fell apart after the Calgary failure. (Investors in P.E.I., Quebec, and Ontario are still considering building Sprung complexes.)

Despite rising worries, agriculture minister Alyward is optimistic. "This could be really big," he says. "This could really change things for Newfoundland."

It will certainly change eating habits for Newfoundlanders. Even though they eat few cucumbers, which have become the source of many local jokes, Newfoundlanders will soon be looking for different, or any, uses for the vegetables. But as Mary Darcy, a food columnist for The Evening Telegram admits, "there are only so many things you can do with a cucumber. We'll have to keep looking for more, I guess."

MARIA JOHANNA ROOYAKERS

Maria Johanna Rooyakers hopes to give her career a boost with her classic knitwear designs

Atlantic designers in competition

In a preview of a fall fashion event, new names and some familiar ones are in the lineup of labels for the Atlantic Designer Fashion Award

by Mary Ann Glanville

Atlantic Canada isn't usually associated with *haute couture*, but Deborah Fennell hopes to change that. She's the director of the second annual Atlantic Festival of Fall Fashion scheduled for early October at the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax.

"At a guess," says Fennell, "there are more than 300 fashion designers in the region, but because they don't have an association, it's hard to locate them." She adds that many designers belong to craft organizations and "are usually lumped together under handcrafts." Fennell says, "Designers are not necessarily crafts people."

One of the highlights of the Fall Festival is the Atlantic Designer Fashion Awards, and Fennell says she's pleased with the response to the competition. Designers from all four Atlantic Provinces submitted photographs, sketches or finished garments, and in early June a panel of five judges selected 12 finalists. They will parade their designs in a special fashion show on Oct. 4. Adjudicators are to choose one to receive the 1987 Atlantic Fashion Design Award. "The show is a chance for the finalists to do some networking among themselves, get publicity and make important contacts," says Fennell.

Colleen Gilmore of Moncton, N.B., who designs formal wear and wedding gowns under the Cigi Designs label, is one of the finalists. Winner of the 1987 New Brunswick Designer Award, Gilmore creates "personality clothing" in collaboration with her clients. She works mostly with silks and adds beading or

Fashion

GORD JOHNSTON

Formal wear ranges from cocktail dresses to elegant gowns by designer Normand Bernard

sequins for detail.

The New Brunswick designer was born in Fredericton and has a background in painting, costume design and sales. She operates a boutique in Moncton where she employs four seamstresses. "I found out about the fashion design award from a friend in Halifax the day before the deadline, sent my submission by courier and it arrived just in time," says Gilmore. She feels isolated from other designers and is taking steps to start an association or a newsletter. "With my business background, I'm just the person to spearhead something," she says.

Normand Bernard and Monica Gallant, two other finalists, have a lot in common. Both live in Miscouche, near Summerside, P.E.I., both are recent graduates of Holland College and both custom design day and evening wear.

Bernard, who also designs men's clothing, enjoys creating "formal wear ranging from cocktail dresses to elaborate bridal gowns." He starts with a drawing, then cuts a flat pattern which he sews in muslin. He makes the necessary changes in the mock-up before working on the final garment. "It's a fairly long process," he says, "but necessary, as some of my creations have as much as 18 metres of fabric." His one-of-a-kind gowns, which often feature beadwork detail, sell for $350 to $400. Bernard finds his clients by word of mouth and he hopes to "develop a portfolio and then go off to study in Europe."

Fellow designer Monica Gallant likes to work with natural fabrics such as wool, silk, satin and cotton. She describes her designs as "clean and simple with nothing to strain the eye." Gallant also designs bathing suits which sell for about $30. Unlike Bernard, who hopes to study in Europe, Gallant "wants to stay on the Island and get something going."

CAT Designs is the label Catherine Toth of Halifax has for her award-winning work which includes both daytime and evening wear. Toth says, "The use and combinations of fabric around classic lines," make her garments distinctive. She works with variations of leather, suede, wool, cashmere and alpaca.

Finalist Dwight Saunders of St. John's, Nfld., designs for daytime, business hours and the evening and often uses bright silks.

Susan Rainsford and Nancy Leary, a new Halifax team, but no strangers to fashion design, turn out hand-painted and

Lace inserts, appliqué and glitter make Sharon Oakley's Harmony Classics eye catching

Kate Church's custom-made sweaters are fun additions to the wardrobes of adults and kids

woven jackets with co-ordinating trousers and skirt. Matching jewelry made from yarn or *papier maché* gives their work a distinctive look.

Costume co-ordinator for the Nova Scotia Tattoo, Rosemarie Gwilliam of Dartmouth, N.S., is a finalist too, with her designs for skirts and shirtdresses in wool challis and mohair. They retail in local shops at prices from $120 to $200.

Kate Church of Mahone Bay, N.S., is a custom knitwear designer who makes colorful sweaters for both children and adults. They are machine knitted in her new shop on Main Street and carry such names as, "I'm a Little Teapot" and "Watermelon Slices." She says that hand-painted silk designs on a cotton base result in garments that are a "combination of fabric and fashion designworks."

Church, a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, moved to Nova Scotia from Toronto three years ago. Unlike some of the other local fashion designers, Church enjoys the sense of isolation.

Sharon Oakley, through her Harmony Classics company, is a well-known member of the Halifax design community. Her hand-knit sweaters sell across Canada and in the U.S. Through her new Halifax outlet which opened this spring, Oakley hopes to produce more one-of-a-kind items and she's also working on new evening sweaters that she says, "have lace inserts, appliqué and glitter."

Another finalist for the fashion award is Lori Ashton who designs bridal wear, lingerie and blouses that carry her popular label, Serendipity Designs. Ashton works from her studio in Prospect, N.S., but will soon open in a Halifax location. She is a graduate of Dalhousie University's costume studies course and her designs reflect the romantic past.

Also a costume history buff, Bunty (Florence) Severs, teaches at the craft school in St. John's, Nfld. She says her studio is "on the edge of a cliff overlooking a bird sanctuary at St. Michael's." Her designs, which include jackets, pants and complete outfits, can be described as "medieval" and she says she always adds "a little surprise." Severs admits there's not much of a market for her dramatic designs in Newfoundland but cheerfully adds, "There's always someone who wants to have some fun." Her work is better known in Western Canada where she has won several awards.

Fashion

JOHN DAVIS

Dramatic designs with a surprising medieval touch characterize clothes by Bunty Severs

This Newfoundland designer's garments are made of silk and leather featuring metallic thread embroidery done with pure gold and silver thread — a technique she studied at the Royal School of Needlework in London, England. Since her arrival in the province in 1957, Severs has kept busy bringing up a large family and just returned to fashion design five years ago.

Another newcomer among the finalists is Maria Johanna Rooyakers. She's been working out of her Halifax apartment since completing the fashion design program at Ontario's Sheridan College. She says her "almost conservative garments — mainly day wear — are designed around machine knits and leather." Maria Johanna, as her label proclaims, uses the finest quality merino yarn for her knitwear which sells in the $300 to $400 range. "Leather works well with knits," she says, pleased that she's been able to add a leather sewing machine to her equipment.

Rooyakers grew up on a farm near Port Hawkesbury, N.S. She says, "I always dressed and combined clothes in a different way," but didn't realize a career in fashion design was "accessible." She studied photography before taking up design. Since returning to Halifax, Rooyakers has built up a small clientele of mainly business people who have heard about her work.

She learned about the Atlantic Fashion Design Awards through a business card salesman and is delighted to be chosen as a finalist, hoping it will give her career a new boost.

Competition is strong as each of the 12 finalists prepare their outfits for the fashion award show, to be held on the largest runway built for such an event in Atlantic Canada. Although one designer will be chosen for the top award, Deborah Fennell says this aspect of the festival is "just the icing on the cake. It's a chance for all of them to make contacts and gain Canada-wide exposure." Fennell looks forward to the day when local designers can sell their fashions in the region instead of going off to Toronto or Montreal. She says, "All the finalists are winners."

PHOTOS BY JOHN DAVIS

Simple lines and natural fibre fabrics create a distinct look for Saunder's latest designs

Dwight Saunders is more than a designer

The bright young man new to the fashion scene has more than pretty clothes in his portfolio of ideas

by Marilyn Duffett

Dwight Saunders, the first Newfoundlander invited to show at the Canadian Festival of Fashion last April, has designs on the Toronto market.

The 28-year-old creator of clothing in cotton and silk has a new fall evening collection in brightly colored silk with luxuriant yardage. It's a sharp contrast to the shirts and vests he sewed from flour bags as an 11-year-old boy for the Ladies' Aid sale in LaScie, a northeast coast fishing village.

These days, the slim six-foot man with the face of a teenager below his self-styled haircut shows his designs in the large living room of his St. John's house on Waterford Bridge Road. Having recently sold his downtown studio, he also gives courses in modeling, makeup and fashion illustration in his home and supervises his staff of up to 10 women in preparation for major fashion shows on the mainland. The next show is in October at the Atlantic Festival of Fashion in Halifax, which he attends as a finalist in the design award competition.

Saunders, who was born in Gander and moved around the province as his father worked at construction sites, never wanted to be the same as the other kids. He asked his mother to knit him sweaters that were different from the store-bought kind.

Today he's buying enough silk paisley to make a dinner jacket to wear at his fashion shows.

After graduating from high school, Saunders left Newfoundland and travelled

Fashion

across Canada finding himself drawn to cities. He attended lectures on fashion whenever he could, worked as a male nurse for a while in Victoria, B.C., then returned to his first love — fashion.

In 1983 Saunders bought a studio in St. John's and began to paint and tie-dye silk scarves to market at local and mainland craft fairs. Next he imported natural fibre fabrics: cotton from China, silk from India, Thailand and Korea.

"I'm not into fads. I'm a roots person," says Saunders. Last year he created two distinct fashion looks. The first, his "earth clothes" production line, springs directly from his childhood flour sack designs. "Earth clothes are one-size separates in unbleached cotton," he says, "influenced by the flowing lines of the sea. They're resort clothes that can be worn to bed, or layered and worn to a cocktail party with chunky jewelry."

The designer's second line is also influenced by his seaside heritage, but with the pageantry of history. Voluminous evening dresses in pure silk are inspired by Ferryland on a fine fall day.

"When the sea mists are rising and the current is strong," he says, "I can imagine the women from Sir Humphrey Gilbert's vessel climbing down from the small brave ship, their full skirts blowing in the wind."

Saunders visualizes the contrast of brightly colored yards of cloth against the rugged Newfoundland coastline, and draws on the evocative theme of 18th-century elegance in designing formal clothing, some of which was among his 40 new fall creations at the Canadian Festival of Fashion. One show-stopper, done in basic black with rose and grey flounces, is made with more than 15 metres of Thai silk and sells for $1,900.

Brilliant colors of scarlet, aqua, emerald green and purple appear in strapless sheaths cut with diagonal stripes. Corselet-style gowns with overskirts hint of a past era.

The two fashion lines also include designs for men's wear, from the casual youth-oriented "earth clothes" to stylized tuxedoes. Musician Moe Koffman, who hosted the show at the Canadian Festival of Fashion in Toronto wore a Saunders' outfit combining dusty rose trousers with a mint green jacket.

JOHN DAVIS

This silk evening dress is a show stopper

What's next for Dwight Saunders? His ambition is not to make what he calls "mega bucks" by being a production man with his clothes manufactured in Hong Kong and sold in chain stores throughout North America. He wants to have an all-couture fashion house that caters to the total woman by providing a health spa as well as makeup, hairstyling, wardrobe, hats and jewelry counselling for every fashion season.

Saunders would like to deal with each client on a one-to-one basis, study her lifestyle and suggest clothing to complement it. He believes this "in-house" concept could work in a smaller city — Victoria, Ottawa — or maybe in his home town of St. John's.

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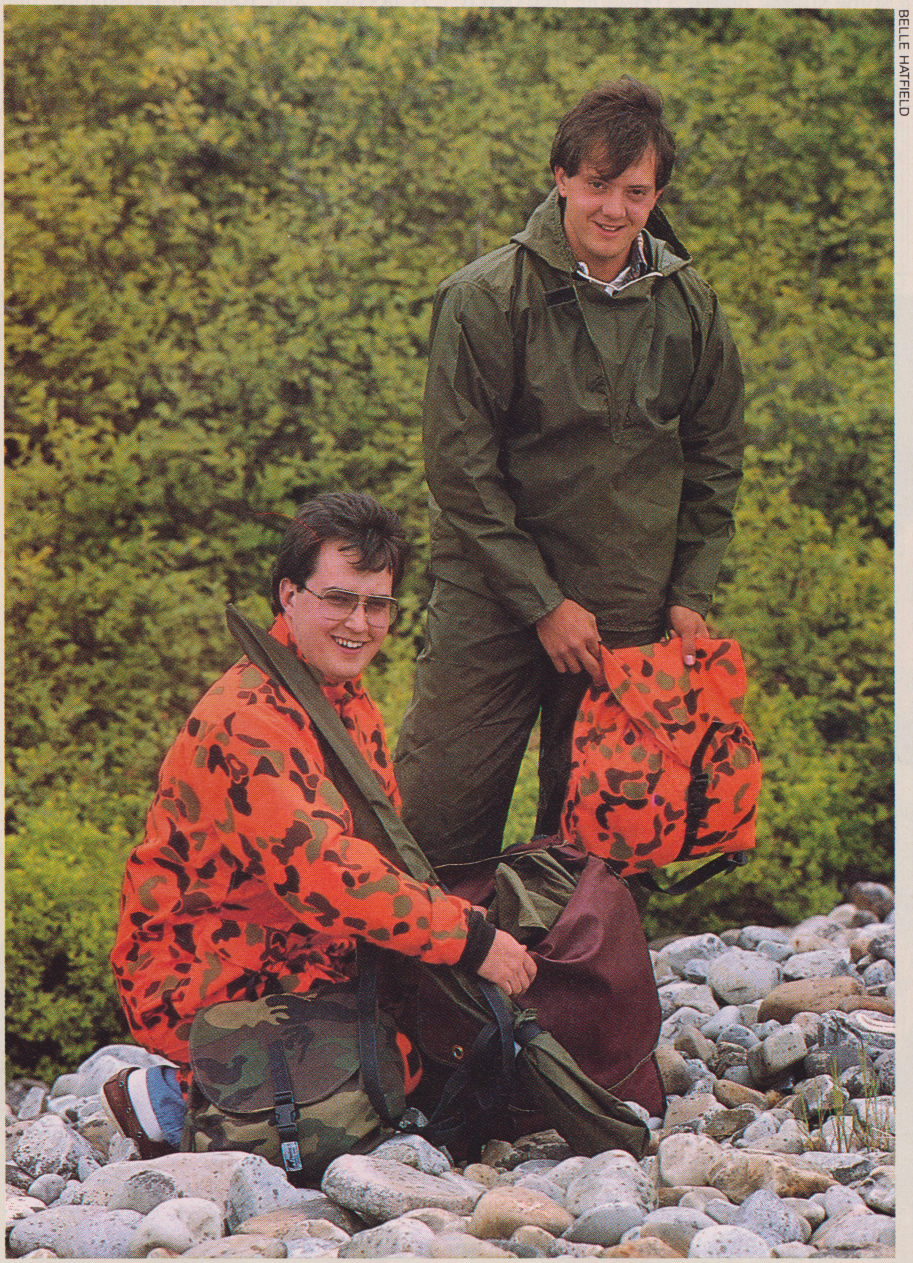
Adventure wear comes out of the woods

What's both seen and unseen but also not heard? Rugged "fashions" made in Nova Scotia and ready for the entire outdoors market

by Belle Hatfield



BELLE HATFIELD

Parlee (l) and Mark Oickle model adventure wear that comes with a 100 per cent guarantee

On the fringe of fashion is clothing that's designed to stand out and clothing designed to blend in. One usually precludes the other, but a sports equipment and apparel manufacturer has found a way of combining the two qualities to produce practical and durable woods wear that can be seen 10 miles away yet manages to provide camouflage.

Glen Parlee's hunting jackets, pants and vests represent a significant part of the merchandise produced by his small company, Parlee's Adventure Gear. Although the resident of Queens County, N.S., admits his line of hunter's orange clothing or his Tobeatic Rain Wear may not make the pages of Vogue magazine, he's banking on his cloth label becoming a sought-after trademark by people who want to be well dressed in the outdoors.

Already the 35 items his company manufactures are stocked in sports stores throughout Atlantic Canada and now, after three years in the business, Parlee is poised to make inroads in Upper Canada and the eastern United States.

"As an entrepreneur working with relatively little capital," he says, "success depends on identifying a niche in the market, developing a product to fill the need and marketing it like crazy." Finding the niche was easy. The native of Timberlea, Halifax County, grew up with a love of the outdoors. Hunting, fishing and acting as a guide for others provided Parlee with many opportunities to discover holes in the market. "I don't know how many times I've thought, 'if only', when I'm in the woods," he says.

The business began to take root when his wife Kathryn helped to alter some of his outdoor equipment. The decision was made in 1985 during Parlee's last year in the Bachelor of Recreation program at Dalhousie University and he chose

Fashion

business oriented elective courses.

Parlee began by creating designs for some simple items: a portable tree perch (a nylon sling seat that allows the woodsman to be elevated for a better vantage point) that could be folded and slipped into a pocket, a wood lugger that fastens around the waist leaving both hands free to pack the load and a rescue device in a compact, easily stored pouch. These are only some of the designs from Parlee's imagination.

With ideas flowing, his wife provided the necessary link to turn his dreams into finished products. "It's a combined effort," he says. "My wife is an expert seamstress and I have the experience with outdoor equipment. Between my ideas, to improve items or to design an item I feel is needed, and Kathryn translating that into something we can sell, we work as a team."

The couple decided they could build a business out of eliminating the "if onlys," and the company was formed. Working from their home they began to manufacture a 10-item product line. Only five of the original items survive in the present 35-item catalogue, but Parlee has learned from earlier mistakes. "The only possible way to break into this market is to go with a product with as much quality as possible and then — stand behind it," he says.

His hunter's vest retails for just under $20, a complete suit with leggings might go for $150. At these prices he's aiming for the serious outdoors person not the weekend hunter. "We're promoting our product for a specific class," he says, "not to sell as many as possible but to sell something of value to people who want and will recognize a quality product."

Parlee's rainwear and hunting gear carries a 100 per cent guarantee. "If they're ever dissatisfied with the function of a garment, or if for any reason it should not perform as specified, it comes back," he says. "We've had that guarantee for three years and we've only re-stitched one item."

Made from material with the trade name Burlington Ten Mile Cloth, his Tobeatic Woods Wear combines several qualities that Parlee considers essential for working in the wild. Water repellent and resistant to the common worries of mildew and moths, Parlee says it's also virtually noiseless.

That's the reason he chose the acrilan acrylic fabric and out of all the new material on the market, he feels it offers the best combination of qualities. "Warm and dry, yes, but in the woods you have to be able to move quietly," he says, adding that some fabrics touted as perfect are "as noisy as a tin boat in a rainstorm."

After the struggle to establish the business, Parlee says the company is finally gaining a respectable market share. "The first two years were slow and a lot of work," he says. "It takes time to gain acceptance in this specialized market, but we're finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel." In the past year demand has grown for his products and with the orders increasing he expects to sell about 8,000 units of Tobeatic Woods Wear during the coming months and that line represents only a part of his inventory.

Following the continuous growth in his product lines since 1985, Parlee intends to concentrate on developing markets for the items he has. With a solid base from which to work, his next plan of action is to consolidate his retail sales in Atlantic Canada while setting his sights on the much larger New England and Upper Canadian markets.

Parlee is also looking for new quarters for his manufacturing operation. Until now he's worked out of the couple's Brooklyn home using four part-time staff as required. Though he's running out of space, Parlee says that with his goal in reach, he's not short of energy or enthusiasm. "What I've dreamed about for the last three years is starting to come true — that we could have a viable business doing something that's very enjoyable and also fills a need."

Coats and jackets from a Yarmouth manufacturer

It's a family business — from design to production to sales. But the real story is about the Vietnamese immigrant couple who have set out to capture a place in the Canadian outerwear market

by Belle Hatfield

In the side room of a small fabric shop on John Street in Yarmouth, N.S., a man works 12 hours a day to produce winter outerwear for the retail and tourist trade. He designs and cuts out fabric for jackets and three-quarter and full-length coats. Since he began in 1984, the market for his products has spread throughout the Maritimes and in five years he plans to sell his outerwear across Canada.

For those who don't know the diminutive Vietnamese immigrant, Hung Le, those plans could be excused as the whims of a dreamer. But dreams haven't figured in the transition of Le and his wife Loi from homeless boat people to a place in Yarmouth's business community. Hard work, talent and careful planning are the contributing factors to their successful life in Canada. The 34-year-old Le, who became a Canadian citizen three years ago, is depending on those same qualities to reach his future goals. "I work hard now, then maybe later I can take it a bit easy," he says.

Working hard means not only designing and cutting fabric for his coats, it also means taking his wares on the road. "Marketing your merchandise," says Le, "is as important as providing a good product to sell." He knows he has the product, he's working hard learning how to sell and his family isn't afraid of long hours.

A sponsoring group brought Hung Le, his wife and their infant daughter to Yarmouth in 1979. With his feet barely touching Canadian soil, Le was already making plans. Three weeks after his arrival and with the help of the sponsoring group, Le had designed and sewn a dress. Several shopkeepers liked the design and wanted more. Unfortunately his plans hit a snag. He couldn't obtain a discount for material, and without the discount he couldn't keep his costs competitive. His plans had to wait.

Le worked steadily at a job with Bonda Textiles in Yarmouth and also began a tailoring business from home with his wife. Eventually they were able to buy a vacant store and opened a retail fabric shop to complement their growing business. Le watched and learned. He had brought the creative talent and expertise

Entrepreneur Hung Le designs outerwear for conservative tastes that won't go out of style

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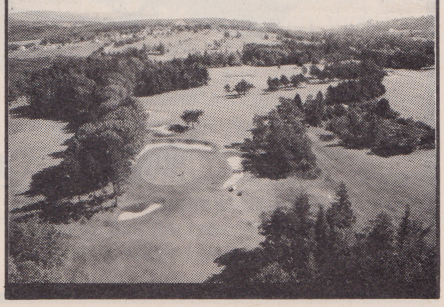

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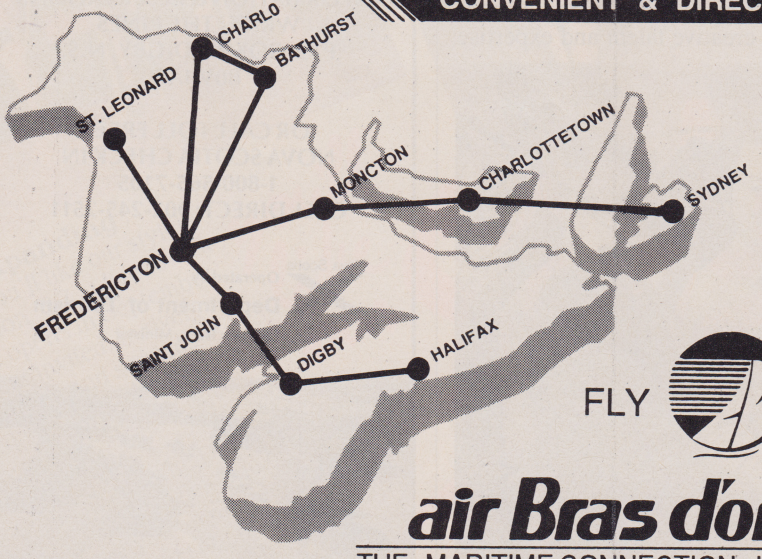

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Fashion

with him from Vietnam. What he had to absorb was the flavor of Canadian fashion.

Finally he felt he was ready. His first design was a jacket available in limited colors and in three sizes. The jackets sold well locally. Tourists were attracted to the distinctive, timeless styling and the catchy label. Seaside Creations was on its way.

Although he keeps an eye on trends coming out of the large fashion centres, Le's creations are not directed towards those on the fringes of fashion. He's aiming for conservative tastes with designs that he doesn't expect to become dated. Careful planning continues to play an important role in the company's development. Le started out small but now he is expanding his line. Last year his stock included eight designs in five colors. This year the line has 128 designs in 11 colors.

Le doesn't sew the coats himself, but he and his wife keep a careful eye on every aspect of the operation. One part-time and two full-time sewers are now employed and Le hopes to add several more before the end of the year. Last spring Le also took on the role of salesperson for Seaside Creations because he felt his garments were getting lost in the midst of so many other labels.

He says people are attracted to his coats because they are made well and he doesn't skimp on fabric. Ranging in price from $120 to $220, he says his outerwear gives good value for the money. "People have to see them," he says. "They make them stop. They see them, then they don't forget." And so far his customers are happy.

That satisfaction has resulted in a high percentage of return orders. Once retailers took a look at the finished product, Le says the orders started rolling in. Now he's ready for another expansion in his business and hopes to sell between 2,000 and 3,000 coats this year. Although Seaside Creations has been pushed as a tourist item, Le knows that in order to crack the retail market and have nationally distributed lines, they have to be successful in Quebec and Ontario. To do that he has to hustle, and to please more than the tourist trade. On a recent sales trip he visited every retail clothing store he could find.

If past performance can be repeated, Le expects to have a fist-full of orders. Then it will be back to designing and cutting out coats in his John Street shop. The fashion business was not Le's first choice of occupation but his dreams of being an engineer died long before he reached Canada. Plans have taken the place of dreams and he's working hard to put those plans into action. So far, he says, "I'm right on schedule."

Long battle over pay equity lost in Glace Bay

Clerical workers at the Glace Bay heavy water plant waged an expensive and protracted legal battle over sex discrimination only to find that human rights legislation had failed them

by Peter Kavanagh

Stored away among hundreds of boxes at an Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) warehouse in Port Hawkesbury, N.S., are the personnel records of their former employees at the Glace Bay heavy water plant. Mixed in with more than 300 other files are those of 44 clerical workers. Those 44 are different. They were the subject of one of Canada's longest and most expensive battles over pay equity.

"When it all began, we were led to believe that we had a really strong case. Hopes were built up and we were excited. But it took so long and dragged on so much," says Debbie McIntyre.

For McIntyre and her co-workers it all began in April '79. The workers' union, the Energy and Chemical Workers Union, filed a claim against AECL before the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The union was looking for $500,000 in retroactive pay for the clerical workers, alleging that they were underpaid because of their sex.

The union argued successfully before the commission that the clerical workers, most of whom were female, were in a job ghetto. They were not paid as much as technical workers — the majority of whom were male — with similar job specifications and education requirements. It seemed simple enough at the time.

Federal law states that wage discrimination on the basis of sex is illegal and the Human Rights Commission accepted that the wage differences could be explained by the issue of sex. McIntyre says, "They told us that this was just the case they were looking for." It was not to be simple at all.

"What we found was that the Federal Human Rights Code isn't worth a damn," explained John Kane, national representative for the Energy and Chemical Workers Union. Kane is deeply frustrated by what happened to the workers' claim.

After the Human Rights Commission agreed with the union, the case became embroiled in a series of legal wrangles. It was new ground for Federal Human Rights Law. There were to be several contentious legal problems. First of all, the clerical workers were not all women, so workers couldn't claim their wages were low on the basis of sex. Secondly, AECL argued that it could not be accused by the union of wage discrimination since the wage differences had resulted from collective bargaining and were written into the contract accepted by the union. The third and most important point was that not all the clerical workers had equivalent jobs in the technical area. This meant the lowest paid of the clerical workers would have difficulty proving wage discrimination.

Noble sentiment and realities of legal wrangling collide

It is that point that most bothers Ken Rodgers, regional coordinator for the union. "They were trying to compare all the jobs...lowest paid with lowest paid and the two lowest classifications in the clerical group, CR-2s and CR-3s, didn't have equivalents. What it came down to was that if there's no job that you're being paid *lower than* — there's no pay equity problem." In Rodgers' view this interpretation exposed a fatal flaw in the legislation.

"In a world with 'male' and 'female' jobs, a finding that actual jobs, as opposed to job values, have to be compared is a major difficulty," says Rodgers.

As the case dragged on, ironies began to pile up. Management and union cooperated in attempting to sort out issues. Eric Durnford, lawyer for AECL, says, "We were prepared to cooperate...we invested incredible hours and resources into this case." In 1986, guidelines for dealing with equal pay cases under the Canadian Human Rights Act were finally put into practice. As well, the heavy water plant closed in 1986 and the workers lost their jobs. Still the case dragged on. Both sides were wearing down.

After an initial favorable ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a first-ever hearing before the new Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and four trips to the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of Canada the case reached a conclusion of sorts. The union presented the workers with an offer from the company.

"I've mixed feelings about the settlement," says McIntyre. "In some ways I'm glad it is over but on the other hand..."

The offer to settle totalled $113,000 and was divided among the workers based on classification and length of service. The offer was accepted after two meetings but not without some resentment. After the second meeting workers were heard to complain that the settlement came too late and was too little. There were accusations that the union took the deal because with no jobs there was no local.

Ken Rodgers denies this. "The simple truth is that the legislation failed us," he says. "We could have taken the case to the Supreme Court and argued it out but we would have lost." Rodgers says the union has an interest in the pay equity issue regardless of whether the union still has members in Glace Bay. "Our union and others have a real stake in seeing this type of legislation work. I think you'll see a lot of jurisdictions looking at the issues involved and checking their legislation for flaws."

Future benefit for other workers is a fine and noble sentiment, but that's what the clerical workers thought it was all about in the first place. "We were told from day one that this was going to be a precedent setting case," says McIntyre. "Two years ago the company offered us a settlement and we turned it down because we were thinking that this would set a precedent."

For McIntyre, and her 43 co-workers, it was a long and losing battle. Equal pay is a popular concept today but the ex-clerical employees at the Glace Bay heavy water plant have inadvertently shown that putting theory into practice is an arduous, costly, frustrating and demeaning exercise. "We went through a lot of mood swings...sometimes we thought this is great, other times we thought this is never going to end," says McIntyre. "I guess a lot of my disappointment comes from realizing that the case was supposed to be big and it went nowhere."

Maritime material is abundant

I'd write a book about the Maritimes, and it would be a breeze. My qualifications were superb. My father was a Nova Scotian, and my mother's people had also been bluenoses. I'd come Down Home from Toronto during boyhood summers, and I'd spent the three most impressionable years of my life at Mount Allison University, Sackville, N.B., which has long been pleased to boast that it's "The Happy Heart of the Maritimes," and lies "at the exact geographic centre of the Maritimes." Moreover, I abandoned Ontario for Nova Scotia 16 years ago. My children grew up here, and my freelance writing has taken me from Cape St. Mary to Cape North in Nova Scotia, from Cardigan Bay to Cascumpec Bay in Prince Edward Island, from Florenceville to Shediac to Caraquet in New Brunswick.

I was the first editor of *Atlantic Insight*, and no job could possibly have given anyone a faster education in the preoccupations of Maritimers. In the eight years and four months since the magazine was born, it has published exactly 100 issues, including the one you're holding, and I've written stuff for every one of them. With such experience, I thought, I'll write the definitive book about the Maritimes as easily as Wayne Gretzky would score during a breakaway on an open net. Instead, the task is proving to be like trying to open an oyster with a bus ticket.

My plan was threefold. First, I'd spend the spring doing research, organizing ideas and getting names of knowledgeable Maritimers in capitals, coves, and covens of village historians. Second, I'd spend the sweetest summer of my life interviewing these people and just bouncing around from bed-and-breakfast joints to glorious campgrounds; from enchanting museums to deep forests; from nightlife in the cities to sunlit life on cushiony beaches. Third, I'd hole up in my remote den at Port Shoreham, N.S., as soon as foul weather struck, and I'd write my best-seller.

But even during Stage One, a disturbing truth dawned on me: the Maritimes are not as neat as Gretzky's open net. They are not neat at all. Their history, geography, economy, loyalties and fears are as varied as their weather is volatile.

I began Stage One by buying and borrowing books, new and used; and collecting articles, scholarly and popular. The greedier I got while collecting paper, the more hopeless the task of organizing it became, and my own office is now a mare's nest of information I can't find when I want it. I might just have the region's biggest private collection of Maritime trivia in here somewhere, but how do I know? Even if I could find what I've gathered, I couldn't read it all much less absorb it. Will I ever get around to reading myriad county, village, and even family histories; and all the creative writing of countless Maritime poets, novelists and short-story writers?

The Maritimes are too complex a subject to confine to the mere pages of a book

Asking that question, I am not even counting the articles from *Atlantic Insight, The Atlantic Advocate, Equinox, Harrowsmith,* daily papers and scholarly journals like *Acadiensis* and the *Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly.* I've now squirreled away hundreds of such pieces, though I can't say exactly how many hundreds, and by the time I started my travels during Stage Two, I felt I might as well have set out to write a book not about the Maritimes but about the whole world.

Naturally, I'd want to visit summer pig-outs. How could I write about the Maritimes without gorging on lobster? The Lobster Eating Contest at Stanhope Beach Lodge, P.E.I., certainly deserved scrutiny, but so did the Lobster Supper at St. Peter's, Cape Breton, the Lobster Supper at Parrsboro, the Lobster Festival in Shediac, the Pictou County Lobster Fisheries Carnival, and the River John Fire Department Lobster Supper.

I'm addicted to all seafood, but a man can spread himself too thin. I'd have to make ruthless decisions between Digby Scallop Days and the Richibucto Scallop Festival; the Fish Fest at Cole Harbour and the Seafest at Yarmouth; the Mackerel Snappers Picnic at East Chester or the Traditional Codfish Supper at Iona, and the Salmon Festival at Campbellton, the Mahone Bay Chowder Festival and the Herring Chokers Picnic at Blandford; Clam Festivals on the Parrsboro shore and the Mollusk Festival at Buctouche. Could I attend the North American Sardine Packing Championship in Black's Harbour, N.B., and make it back to Nova Scotia that same weekend to try my hand at butter-making at the Ross Farm Museum?

Man can't live by fish alone. He needs pork, too, and during a summertime tour of the Maritimes he has his choice of the New Brunswick Pork Barbecuing Festival at Hampton, the Pork Chop Barbecue at Scotsburn, N.S., and the annual Maitland Day Hog Roast. New Brunswick has at least three corn festivals. Tupperville, N.S. has its Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Festival; Bear River, N.S. has its Cherry Carnival; King's Landing, N.B. has its Apple Festival; Elgin, N.B. has its Blueberry Maple Fest; and communities throughout the region boast strawberry festivals. That pretty well takes care of dessert, but if you want to add further sin to overindulgence just pop over to the border town of St. Stephen, N.B. for Chocolate Fest '87.

Altogether, from June 1 to Sept. 30, the three Maritime provinces boast more than 400 gustatory, athletic and cultural festivals, and that's not even counting the ones that didn't make the official lists of the tourism departments.

Then there are the museums, the restored forts, mills, shops, farms and houses, and the historic villages. In Nova Scotia alone, more than 125 of these institutions serve visitors who want to explore the past painlessly, and as the summer began, I was certain of only two things: first, I'd be a fatter man when the wind stripped the leaves from the trees and I sat down to write; and second, I'd been right to talk my publisher into not insisting that I include Newfoundland and Labrador in the book. Still, I love fish and brewis, and I'd like to try figgy duff. Maybe next year.

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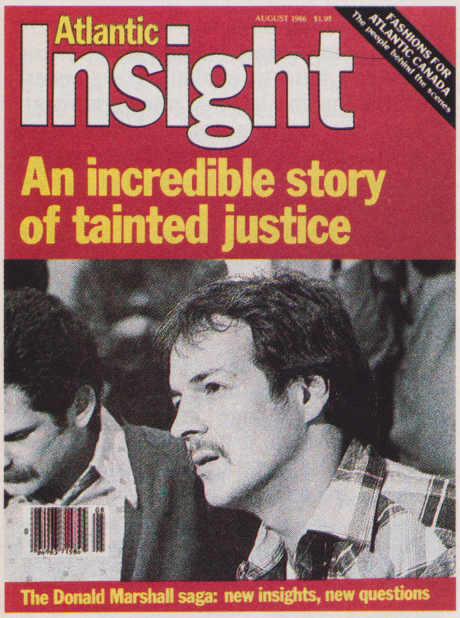

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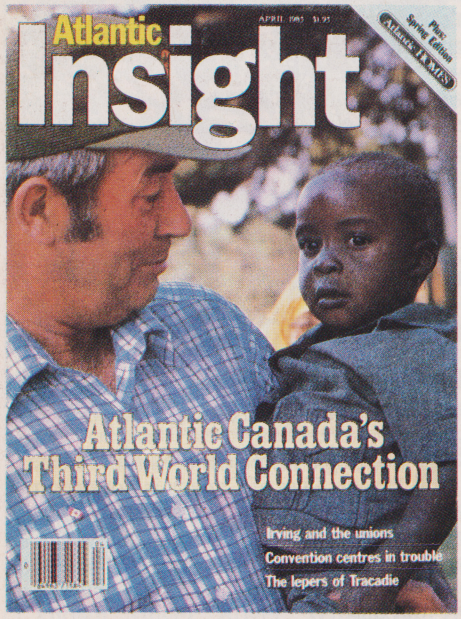


FOLKS

After recently receiving the Star of Courage from Governor General Jeanne Sauvé for the 1986 fire rescue of a Charlottetown man, **Const. Dave Cheverie** of the Charlottetown Police Department in P.E.I. is a hero again.

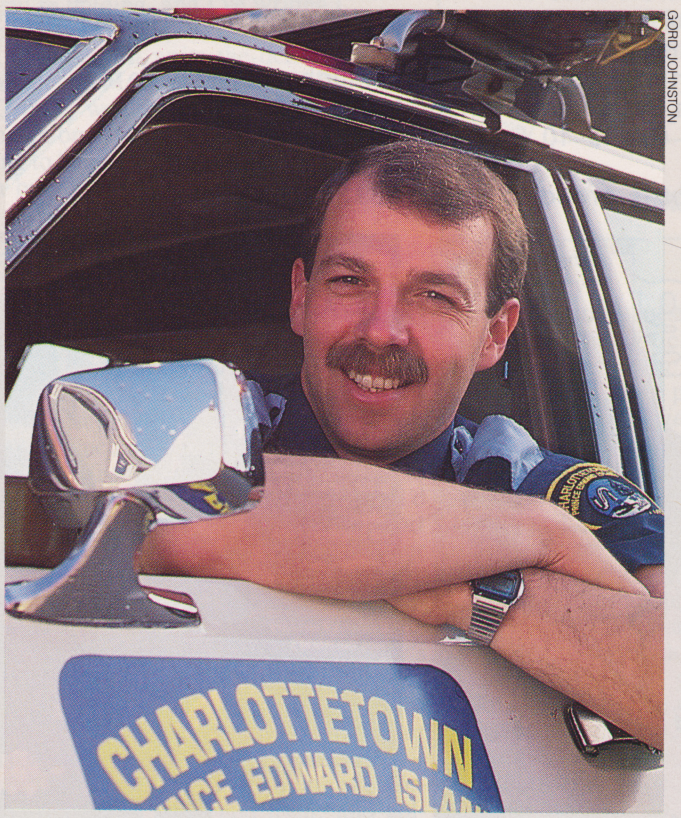
The shift on May 16 started out quietly enough for the 31-year-old Cheverie but before it was over, he had rescued three children trapped in the upstairs of a burning townhouse in Charlottetown.

Cheverie and Const. Clyde Sangster were on routine patrol when Cheverie noticed flames inside the building. They ran inside and were met by a wall of fire and intense heat that singed Cheverie's hair and melted Sangster's watch. Crawling through the livingroom, Cheverie heard faint cries from upstairs. He ran through thick smoke into an upstairs bedroom and by searching on hands and knees, he found three-year-old Bridie MacLean behind the door. He carried the unconscious girl outside and ran back through the flames. "The second time I entered, I knew there would be no third time," says Cheverie.

Cheverie found 13-year-old Tara Reno in a second bedroom. Throwing her over his shoulder, he searched the remaining rooms, although the heat was so intense he knew he couldn't stay much longer. He found 11-year-old David Reno in a third bedroom, put him under his arm, and carried the children to safety. Ten seconds later, a huge fireball totally ignited the unit.

Cheverie is embarrassed by all the publicity and considers efforts like this a part of his job. "I am just a policeman who was doing my job and was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time."

Nevertheless, three Charlottetown children still think Cheverie is pretty special.



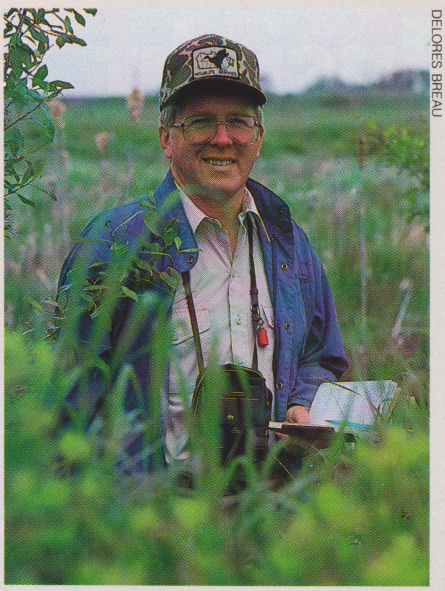
GORD JOHNSTON

Const. David Cheverie: a hero in Charlottetown

Wildlife biologist **Allan Smith** has been working for the Canadian Wildlife Services in Sackville, N.B. for 20 years. His work for the federal agency concentrates on the regional habitat program for migratory birds. But it is through some of his activities in the local naturalist's society which he helped found in 1973 that he has been able to identify some unusual pheasants. The birds have been inhabiting the Tantramar Marsh between Sackville, N.B. and Amherst, N.S. for the last 10 years.

Although identical in size and shape to the ring-necked pheasants introduced to the area by sporting clubs in the 1930s and '40s, the birds are much darker in color. The males are deep green and black instead of russet and brown, and most lack the white neckband common to the males of many pheasant species. Females are chocolate brown rather than tan.

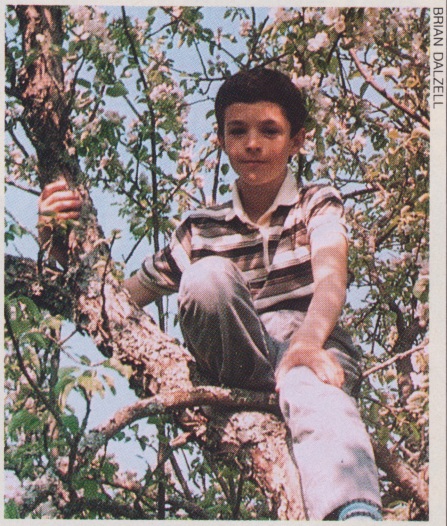
After studying the birds, which make up five to 10 per cent of the marsh's pheasant population, Smith has concluded that they are not a new species but mutant ring-necked pheasants whose coloring is caused by melanism—an abnormal development of dark pigmentation. "Some of the birds introduced here 50 years ago may have carried the mutant strain," Smith says. "Why it's showing up now is hard to explain. It's a recessive trait that has become more dominant. There has been a recent infusion of Korean ring-necks here and maybe they have more of the gene that carries this tendency."


DELORES BREAU

Smith: a biologist with an eye for pheasants

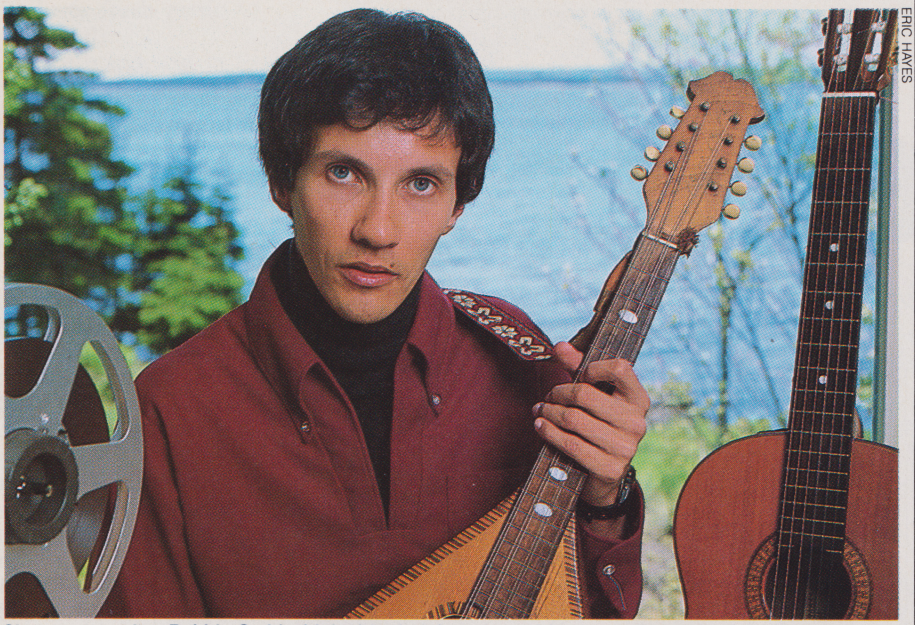
While melanistic mutants have been spotted occasionally in flocks of ring-necked pheasants in Europe, they have not been reported elsewhere in the Maritimes.

Smith doubts the dark birds are likely to evolve in other parts of Canada and feels the percentage of them on the Tantramar Marsh is unlikely to increase. "In a way," he says, "that's too bad. These mutants are truly majestic."


BRIAN DALZELL

Matthew has developed a social conscience early

Adopting a foster child with the Foster Parents Plan of Canada is not uncommon, for those who can spare the $23 a month it takes to support a child in a foreign country. What is unusual is when both foster child and foster parent are the same age.



ERIC HAYES

Singer-songwriter Robbie Smith thinks it's time he released his own album of original pieces

But **Matthew Howes** is a determined 11-year-old and when he discovered his $10 monthly allowance would not cover the cost of his foster friend, he promptly took on odd jobs for neighbors to make up the balance. He gets regular updates on his new friend, Kantharaju, who lives with his mother in the village of Madhalur near Bombay, India, and Matthew writes back about his passion for snakes.

Matthew lives in Chamcook, N.B., with his parents and two younger brothers, Alexander and Ben. While he readily admits to being "broke all the time," he says he's content just to live by the sea and go for walks in the woods. Besides exploring nature, Matthew is a wolf cub and plays minor hockey. He also engages in Tae Kwon Do lessons, practises ballet, plays the flute and is the youngest altar boy at the Roman Catholic Church of St. Andrews.

He says he'd like to visit his friend in India some day, but only if it didn't interfere with his school work. His mother Julie says while southern New Brunswick is sometimes thought of as the backwoods of Canada, it would be hard to raise an 11-year-old in a big city and have him turn out as idealistic as Matthew is.

In the small community of East Jordan, N.S., singer-songwriter **Robbie Smith** lives with his family in an appropriately named Round House, overlooking Jordan Bay.

Smith is a man of many musical talents. He sings, writes lyrics, arranges and composes music and plays the violin, guitar, banjo, mandola, autoharp and organ.

It's difficult to describe Smith's musical style — folk probably comes closest. Smith prefers to call his songs "Robbie songs," a term coined by well-known singer Roger Whittaker. In 1978 Whittaker recorded Smith's *The Last Song*. "Nothing has equalled it since," says Smith.

Whittaker and other artists have since recorded several of Smith's songs, which have been played in Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the British Isles. Some of Smith's pieces have been featured on CBC Radio shows. In addition, Smith has composed commercial jingles.

This winter Smith released his first album, *I Think It's Time*. All 12 songs on the album were produced, performed and recorded by Smith in his bedroom — a difficult job that took several months.

"I tried to capture the natural sound of the songs, without cluttering them up with a lot of production," says Smith. In fact, many of the songs contain the natural sounds of his environment. In *Siesta*, for instance, Smith uses bird sounds. As well, Smith often writes songs which have a Maritime flavor, reflecting his love of the sea.

In the future Smith plans to record another album which will feature some of the many songs he couldn't use in *I Think It's Time*. Smith also plans to perform live in several concerts. This fall a profile of Smith will be aired on Atlantic Satellite Network's *New Faces*.

Radio station VOWR in St. John's, Nfld., is a station with a difference. Owned by Wesley United Church, VOWR is staffed entirely by volunteers of different religious persuasions.

One volunteer, **Everett Hudson** (known behind the scenes as Mr. VOWR) began working at the station in 1945. A modest, soft-spoken man of 73, Hudson punches in 40 to 50 hours a week since his retirement from John Labatt Ltd. in 1974. Hudson has been involved in all aspects of VOWR, from sitting on the governing board to telephoning for the radio auction — the main source of funding for the station. Hudson says he regards his commitment as "something I enjoy doing. Maybe it's an obsession, but I have a tremendous love and respect for VOWR."

Once known as 8WMC, the station emerged as the first one in Newfoundland with an original broadcast power of 100 watts. Now it operates on 5,000 watts and there are plans to expand to 10,000 watts, enabling it to reach far beyond the present range of the Avalon Peninsula.

The station carries a varied fare from country, easy listening and classical music to live Sunday church services and taped programs from Europe.

VOWR broadcasts 75 hours weekly, maintaining a healthy segment of the listening audience who enjoy commercial-free radio. Program director Hudson says, "Our success is due to the quality of our programming. I wouldn't ever want to see that slip."

RAY FENNELLY

Everett Hudson: Mr. VOWR takes to the airwaves at a volunteer radio station in Newfoundland

Chanterelle

A golden August harvest of the forest floor reveals a variety of wild mushrooms for the picking — if you know where to look

PETER BARSS

by Judith Comfort

Suppose for a moment that the only bread you've ever tasted has been store-bought white sliced. One day, you're given a hot cross bun or a bite of crusty sourdough. Imagine your taste buds doing cartwheels. That's how I felt after my first taste of wild mushrooms.

Once I thought that *Agaricus bisporis* (the common mushroom cultivated in manure) was all there was to life. I went a little wild myself when I realized that the flavor and texture of mushrooms vary as widely as that of other foods. I discovered sweet nutty *Boletus edulis*, apricot-perfumed *Craterellus cornucopiodes* and marshmallow-textured puffballs.

For a dependable supply of mushrooms I count on *Cantharellus cibarius*, commonly known as chanterelle. Over the years I've discovered the secret spots in my neighborhood where they thrive and return magically year after year.

In fact, chanterelle are so prolific in Atlantic Canada that Helross Products of New Glasgow, N.S., has actually made the collection and exportation of these wild fungi into a commercially viable business. Freelance harvesters numbering 150 to 200 bring their mushrooms in to buy stations where one of the company's nine trucks picks them up daily. The chanterelle are brushed clean and loosely packed before being rushed to the airport.

Lou Kiley, one of the owners of Helross, says that mushrooms growing wild in the forests of Pictou County one morning, can be on sale in a market in Germany the next evening. (To this date chanterelle have not been sold on the local market except to some Halifax restaurants.) As a solitary forager I was glad to talk to a professional and was anxious to glean the secrets of the mushrooms. Kiley told me that when conditions are just right he can go out with a friend and collect 50 pounds of chanterelle in four hours. But what exactly are these conditions? For over a decade in the forests and fields near my home, I've been trying to figure out what makes the little fungi grow. I've found them both in old orchards and flourishing on gravel road allowances, during dry spells and in downpours.

Kiley's answer to the question of ideal growing conditions is: "In Pictou, Guysborough and Antigonish Counties they grow best in older, healthy spruce woods where the trees are about 30 feet tall. The forest floor is a well-drained moss and the chanterelle can be found where the sun breaks through occasionally." He feels that the temperature of the soil is as important as the amount of rainfall. A good time period has a few days of rain followed by five days of sunshine. Under favorable conditions the chanterelle will grow back every 10 to 14 days.

It's important to cut the mushrooms at ground level, not to *pick* them. This leaves the soil undisturbed and also keeps the mushrooms clean in the basket. Kiley emphasizes that chanterelle should be brushed clean just prior to cooking, and never washed unless absolutely necessary.

Beginners would be wise to find a veteran picker who can take them into the woods to show them the mushrooms firsthand. Failing this, there are many field guides available in bookstores and libraries. For those who feel that learning to identify wild mushrooms correctly and then spending hours battling brush and flies is too much trouble for a few fungi, there is hope. Perhaps through consumer demand chanterelle and other wild delicacies will soon be offered in the marketplace much like their cultivated cousins.

Wild Chanterelle in Phyllo

Phyllo (Filo) is a paper-thin flour and water pastry that can be purchased in Greek or Lebanese groceries. The light crisp strudel dough is a wonderful contrast to the aromatic, moist mushroom filling.

½ cup butter
1 medium onion
4 cups sliced fresh chanterelle
1 tbsp. snipped fresh dill weed or 1 tsp. dried dill weed
¼ cup grated mild white cheese
salt and pepper to taste
1 package fresh or frozen defrosted phyllo

Filling

Melt ¼ cup butter in large skillet. Finely dice onion and sauté until translucent. Increase heat to medium-high. Add chanterelle, stirring often until volume is reduced. Chanterelle will be slightly crisp if picked in a dry season. If picked in a rainy season, juice will settle in skillet. Continue cooking for a few minutes to reduce liquid. Remove from heat. Cool and stir in dill, cheese, salt and pepper.

To assemble:

Have a damp cloth on hand to cover any phyllo not in use. Melt ¼ cup butter. Carefully peel off one layer of phyllo and place on counter. Brush lightly with melted butter. Place second sheet of phyllo over first. Repeat with butter and phyllo until you have 6 layers. Place filling 1 inch from end and ½ inch from sides. Roll into a cylinder. Place on buttered cookie sheet and dot with butter. Pinch down ends. Bake at 400°F for 10 to 15 minutes until crispy golden. Remove from oven, slice and serve. Yield: 4-6 servings.

Hot Mushroom Garden Salad

Compose a salad of garden greens and baby vegetables. Just before serving, stir in herb dressing (or your favorite oil and vinegar dressing) and hot sautéed chanterelle. Vary quantities according to your taste and what is freshest from the garden or market.

fresh garden greens such as romaine, spinach, chard, lettuce, arugula, whole baby carrots, beans, peas
sliced baby cucumbers, zucchini
nasturtium flowers
snipped parsley, chives
steamed new potatoes
2 cups sliced fresh chanterelle
3 tbsp. butter or clarified butter

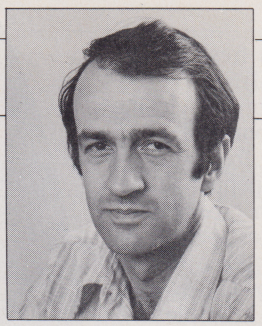
PHOTO BY ERIC HAYES

2 cloves fresh garlic (optional)
1 slice bread, cut in cubes (optional)
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Wash greens and vegetables, pat them dry and place in large salad bowl. Set aside. Prepare herb blender dressing (recipe follows). Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sliced garlic and chanterelle and saute until slightly crisp. If amber liquid accumulates in pan, continue frying until it evaporates, or stir in bread cubes and fry until crisp. To serve: toss fried mushrooms (and bread cubes) with greens, vegetables and as much dressing as you like. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Blender herb dressing
⅔ cup good quality olive oil
¼ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice, wine or balsamic vinegar or combination
1 clove fresh garlic (optional)
2 tbsp. parmesan cheese
1 egg yolk
1-2 tbsp. fresh snipped herbs such as dill weed, thyme, basil, marjoram

Place all ingredients in a small blender jar and process until smooth.



New agency must avoid fast fix

Premier John Buchanan says it places Nova Scotia, and presumably the entire Atlantic region, on the verge of a "new economic era." NDP leader Ed Broadbent calls it "an incredible hoax." Several people in Newfoundland said something like this: "A bureaucracy in Moncton rather than in Ottawa. What good is that going to do us?"

Thus was greeted the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the latest (and, if it fails, maybe the last) attempt at regional economic development in Atlantic Canada. As the chorus of cheers and curses indicates, what we have to start with is at least a sprightly conversational piece.

Whether we have more, remains to be seen. The initiative is different from previous ones by virtue of being centred in Atlantic Canada rather than in Ottawa and because it will be strongly influenced by the private sector through an advisory board. These features give the new agency a chance to attack economic problems from a different psychological vantage point than its defunct predecessor, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE), but in themselves they guarantee nothing. Things can go wrong out of headquarters in Moncton as well as out of Ottawa.

The hazards are many for this new outfit. The public is skeptical and business is wary. But most dangerous of all is the likelihood that politicians in power will be looking for something to crow about as elections come up over the next couple of years. This could be fatal. In order to have any chance of success, the agency must be allowed to set its aims and carry them out without political taint.

DREE foundered in part because of the unrealistic expectations created for it. As defined in its highly politicized launching in 1968 by the Trudeau Liberals, DREE would do nothing less than bring Atlantic Canada up to the national average in all economic categories: unemployment rates, average income and others. Not that this shouldn't be the implicit goal, but broadcasting it simply put DREE under the gun. How long would it take to bring Atlantic Canada up to scratch? Before the next election was the assumed reply. Thus DREE spent money desperately, much of it on failing businesses, until it failed itself.

Now we have John Buchanan saying that the Atlantic Agency presages a new economic era. To start when? Just after the next election? The risk is that by the time the next federal election rolls around in a couple of years' time the Atlantic Agency will have been made to look, rightly or wrongly, like a Tory goody bag.

Economic development can't work on a political cycle.

It needs time and a quiet environment — the very antithesis of electoral politics. As such, the real measure of success for the new agency, at least initially, would be public confidence that the thing is working. If new enterprises are being formed, if bureaucracy is indeed reduced as promised (despite suspicions that the contrary will occur), if there are no spectacular flops or imbroglios with whiffs of political influence, and if entrepreneurs like it, then that confidence will be achieved.

Confidence will only be a first step, although a very large one. It will be based on many small successes. (The temptation to go for big fast fixes that usually flop is a result of political haste). After that, small enterprises may grow. In a while a point or two might be shaved off the unemployment rate. Later, maybe more. It can't happen in a hurry.

The agency, as announced in June, was just a shell. Its specific aims and methods were to be outlined later, with local input. This is fine. The announcement did say that in addition to funding business and industrial programs, the agency would coordinate other federal activities in the region touching on economic development, such as government purchases, skills training, local investment promotion and "technology infrastructure development." Fine again, except for that last one.

Let me issue a caveat to the directors of the Atlantic Agency. "Infrastructure" is a politically loaded word, like "megaproject." The public mistrusts it. It hints at electoral motives, and at a suspect philosophy that says: if you build a highway, a sewer or a water line to nowhere industries will magically appear alongside it. "Infrastructure" is basically John Buchanan's idea of economic development — a way to pump money in fast.

Every time a large green sign appeared proclaiming that such and such a stretch of highway was being built thanks largely to money from DREE (or from its financially reduced successor, the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, DRIE) the worthiness of regional development took a plunge in public esteem.

What about Ed Broadbent's problem? Broadbent says the Mulroney government has cut about $4 billion in various programs in Atlantic Canada. Now it's replacing that with $1 billion over five years. Thus the hoax.

Maybe it is a hoax, but not on that basis. A dollar well-spent is certainly worth four shoved down a rathole. A lot of federal spending here — in part the petroleum incentives grants for offshore drilling, some transport subsidies and much regional development money — has been in that category, mostly increasing the east coast dependency syndrome as well as cynicism towards government.

I'd even go so far as to say that too much money available for regional development is counterproductive. It increases both the visibility of the operation and the political stakes in its outcome. I can't swear that the agency's dollar will be well-spent, but it's a trade-off that must be risked.

Other problems might crop up. With headquarters in Moncton, will this agency have a strong voice in cabinet, where a transport or a tax decision might undo progress in cutting down regional disparities? In fact, is Ottawa perhaps trying to get out of regional development completely? Is the message: "Here's a billion dollars. Good-bye and good luck?"

Perhaps. But even so, Ottawa is only responding to a decade of criticisms from this region, especially by business people, who are now given a chance to participate in the process.

Litany of hazards aside, the agency has a far better chance of success than previous attempts, if for the simple reason that there now exists a body of past experience, from here and elsewhere. The agency has a sound informational and philosophical base to draw on through the Canadian Institute for Research on Regional Development at the University of Moncton.

The Institute is headed by Donald Savoie, who did the legwork to set up the Atlantic Agency, and is perhaps the country's foremost thinker on regional development matters. The ship, I would say, is well-launched. It must now clear the shoals, the fog, the storms and other perils of regional development in Atlantic Canada.

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